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RELIGION  
FOR TO-DAY

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## **RELIGION FOR TO-DAY**

**BOOKS BY  
JOHN HAYNES HOLMES**

**THE REVOLUTIONARY FUNCTION OF  
THE MODERN CHURCH**

**MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE**

**IS DEATH THE END?**

**NEW WARS FOR OLD**

**RELIGION FOR TO-DAY**

# RELIGION FOR TO-DAY

*Various Interpretations of the  
Thought and Practise of  
the New Religion  
of our Time*

BY  
JOHN HAYNES HOLMES  
=



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1917



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TO  
THE MEMBERS AND FRIENDS  
OF THE  
CHURCH OF THE MESSIAH  
IN COMMEMORATION OF THE TEN  
YEARS THEY HAVE SUSTAINED ME IN  
THE MESSIAH PULPIT  
THIS BOOK IS GRATEFULLY DEDICATED



## PREFACE

The contents of this present volume comprise a list of thirteen addresses, selected out of the many delivered in the Messiah Pulpit, and elsewhere on manifold occasions, during the last ten years. These particular addresses, with the exception of slight verbal corrections, are printed here exactly as spoken to my audiences. They are chosen for publication not because of any connection with one another in form and content; and no attempt has been made to arrange or adapt them so that they may present a systematic whole. Each has been included in this collection because of its own especial character as a representative expression of radical thought on religious questions of the day. In so far as they are subject to any kind of classification, they have fallen naturally into four groups. The first address, "The New Religion," may be regarded as an introduction to, or summary of, the general theme of the book. Then follow, in three addresses, statements of certain principles underlying the liberal religion of our time. The next three addresses provide examples of certain aspects of the characteristic thought of this religion. The third group, also of three addresses, embodies different illustrations of that social application of religious idealism which con-

stitutes the distinctive feature of "religion for to-day." In the last group are three addresses, delivered shortly after the opening of the Great War, which may be taken as indicating one phase of the spiritual reaction which followed upon this stupendous event.

It is obvious that this collection of addresses, like every collection of the kind, lacks the merit of presenting a systematic and thorough treatment of the subject; and fails altogether to touch upon certain important aspects of the subject, as for example, immortality. Serious as these facts are, they are necessarily involved in the limitations of the scheme here adopted, and must therefore in the beginning be accepted and discounted. On the other hand, is the unquestioned advantage of such a collection in opening up new lines of thought, in offering a viewpoint and a method for the consideration of questions of religious theory and practice, in quickening by flashlight suggestions a curiosity to know and understand the whole system of thought, or gospel of religion, of which such glimpses are the momentary and therefore imperfect expression, and in communicating that contagion of the free spirit which is the Alpha and Omega of true religion not only to-day but yesterday and forever. If these addresses do no more than turn an occasional reader from the old religion to the new, help an occasional reader who has already abandoned the old to find the new, persuade an occasional reader who has found the new to rejoice and then convey the secret of his rejoicing to other hearts, I shall be well content.



## PREFACE

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One other motive underlies the publication of this volume. On February 4, 1917, I shall complete ten years of service in the Messiah Pulpit. It is my hope that, to the dear friends who have "lent me (their) ears" and shared with me their hearts during this period, these addresses here collected may appear as a kind of record of our long and happy association. In this spirit and to this end, I have taken the liberty of dedicating this book to my people. Sensible as I am of the inadequacy of this slight offering, it gives me comfort that I can here bear public testimony to my gratitude and affection.

JOHN HAYNES HOLMES.

Church of the Messiah  
New York City  
December 1, 1916.



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## **INTRODUCTORY.**



# RELIGION FOR TO-DAY

## THE NEW RELIGION

It must be recognised at the outset of our discussion of this subject, that, in the deepest and finest sense of the word, the new religion is the same as the old religion. There is a great truth involved in the majestic words of traditional adoration, "As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end, Amen." For religion, after all, has to do fundamentally with the attempt of the human soul to get into right relations with God, and God, by the very nature of his being, is "a constant quantity." "With him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." "He is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever." And the same therefore must be the endeavours of men in every age to find him, to know him, to love him, to serve him. Nothing is more impressive in the modern study of comparative religions, than the discovery of the essential identity of these religions. Turn to the consideration of any people, no matter how remote, or of any age, no matter how primitive, and you find that religions are indeed many, but that religion itself is one! Here in all cases do we find the recognition of some kind of a supreme being, spiritual in nature, who is regarded as the creator of the universe, the source of

living energy, and the ruler of the world. Here do we find the deliberate and persistent endeavour to get into relations with this deity — to understand his mind, propitiate his favour, and serve his purposes. Here do we find the august affirmation of the essential kinship of humanity with God, and the consequent destiny of every human soul to some kind of immortality. Especially do we find the definition and inculcation of a rule of life which is well pleasing unto God and therefore necessary to happiness and prosperity in this world and in the next. These are the essential ingredients of religion as we have known it in the past. And what is true of the past, is true also, we may be sure, of the future. If religion is destined to endure, as I most certainly believe that it is, it will continue to preserve, through all the ages that are to come, exactly this same content which I have just described. Religion will always be the same in its search after God if haply it may find him, in its hopeful expectancy of a life beyond the grave, in its belief in the essential integrity of the world, in its faith in the ultimate triumph of good over evil, in its endeavours after the kind of life which will bring salvation to the soul. Experienced travellers have again and again borne testimony to the fact that, in the strangest lands of earth, one can feel at home in the public ceremonies of religion, for, however unfamiliar the language and practices of devotion, worship is still worship and prayer is always prayer. And as with different places, so also with different ages! If you and I were suddenly to be transported this day

far back into the Athens of Pericles or the Rome of Augustus or the Jerusalem of David, we would undoubtedly find nothing so familiar as the temples and their services. And if, in the same way, we were suddenly to be transported far ahead into some distant Utopia of the future, it is altogether certain that we would recognise nothing so quickly as the religious activities of the people. The religion of to-morrow will be in all essentials the religion of to-day, just as the religion of to-day in all its essentials is still the religion of yesterday.

I have quoted the famous saying, "religions are many, but religion is one." While recognising that religion is indeed one and the same thing in every age of human experience, it is important for us to recognise that it is also true that religions are nevertheless "many!" Religion, in other words, which is permanent, works out into all sorts and kinds of religions, which are passing. Every age has its own particular ideas, experiences, and hopes; and inevitably these give different colour or shape to the expression of the unvarying religious sentiment of the soul. It was natural for the Greeks, who cultivated fertile valleys and basked in pleasant sunshine, to interpret religion in different terms of thought and practice from the Iranians, who walked on rocky pathways and wrestled with tempestuous skies. It was impossible for the Romans, who became the masters of the world and the builders of the greatest empire of law and order that mankind has ever seen, to express their religious emotions in the form of institutions and cere-

monials which would have much identity with those of the Jews, for example, who were for centuries the ravaged victims of every military conqueror of the East. It was inevitable that the new ideas, which came rushing into the minds of men like a loosened flood in the period of the Renaissance, should lead to a transformation in the field of religion no less revolutionary and epoch-making than the transformation in the field of culture. Religion in its essence is undoubtedly an abiding reality, as I have said, but the conceptions of religion are as different as the different environments in which men live, the different experiences which they undergo, the different perspectives of knowledge and aspiration from which they gaze upon the world. Religion is like a river. The same great tide of water is sweeping on from the springs in the distant mountains to the outlet in the sea. But here it is "the still waters" by "green pastures," and there a foaming cataract between the granite walls of a mighty canyon; here it runs smooth and clear through sandy soil, there it is discoloured with mud or turgid with the defilement of a city's refuse. The same river is a hundred different rivers as it makes its way to the sea by fields and mountains, through deserted forests and busy villages, by quiet farms and crashing factories. And so with religion! Ever the same in essence, it takes on a new and distinct character in every country which it enters and in every age through which it moves. "From epoch to epoch," says Mazzini, in his *From the Council to God*, "the pages of the eternal gospel are turned; each fresh page, disclosed

by the ever-renovated spirit of God, indicates a period of progress marked out by the providential plan, and corresponds historically to a religion. Each religion sets before mankind a new idea — each is a fragment of eternal truth. So soon as that idea, comprehended by the intelligence and incarnated in the hearts of mankind, has become an inalienable part of universal tradition, even as the mountain traveller, on reaching one summit beholds another rising above him, so is a new idea or aim presented to the human mind, and a new conception of life arises to consecrate that idea. Having accomplished its mission, that religion disappears, leaving behind the portion of truth that it contained, and straightway a new religion appears!" This phenomenon of the passing in the permanent is what we have in mind when we compare the religion of the Babylonians with that of the Egyptians, or the religion of the first century after Christ with that of the Middle Ages. And this it is which we very particularly have in mind, when we look into the future and try, as best we can, to forecast the religion of to-morrow as contrasted with the religion of yesterday and to-day.

It is doubtful if ever before, in the spiritual history of the race, this question of the new religion was ever so pertinent as it is at this present moment. Conceptions of religion, as we have seen, have always changed, as the ideas and experiences of men have changed. But never have these changes been so fundamental and so universal as to-day. It was this fact which prompted Dr. Charles William Eliot to the writing of



his famous essay on *The Religion of the Future*. "The nineteenth century," he says, "immeasurably surpassed all preceding centuries in the increase of knowledge, and in the spread of scientific inquiry and of the passion for truth-seeking. . . . (My) observing and thinking life has covered the extraordinary period since the *Voyage of the Beagle* was published, anæsthesia and the telegraph came into use, Herbert Spencer issued his first series of papers on evolution, Kuenen, Robertson Smith and Wellhausen developed and vindicated Biblical criticism, J. S. Mill's *Principles of Political Economy* appeared, and the United States, by going to war with Mexico, set in operation the forces which abolished slavery on the American continent — the period within which mechanical power came to be widely distributed . . . and all the great fundamental industries of civilised mankind were reconstructed." It is evident that such changes as these, within the period of a single life-time, have brought us a new world, and, by the same token also, a new religion. What this religion is, no man can say. It is still a matter more of the future than of the present. But what this new religion is destined to be, at some date not too far distant, is a matter which is well within the range of reasonable speculation. Certain large characteristics of the new religion of to-morrow have become manifest in our time, just as, on an early day of the creation, certain great continents lifted themselves out of the waste of chaos, and straightway took form and content.

I. In the first place, I believe we may affirm that

the new religion will be a scientific religion. For three hundred years or more, the battle has been raging between theology and science. At first the conflict seemed to be concerned with the facts about the crucial problems of the origin, destiny and character of the world. On the one side was religion, with a great mass of legends and traditions, gathered up from all sorts of ancient sources, Jewish, classic, and barbarian. On the other side was science with a rapidly accumulating mass of facts gathered up from observatories, laboratories, archæological expeditions and historical researches. In no single instance, so far as I know, did the traditions of the priest match with the conclusions of the scientist. And it was the necessity, thus created, of finding out which side of the controversy was to be trusted, that led to the discovery that there is something more fundamental involved here than any mere dispute as to doctrines and facts.

At the heart of this whole business is a matter of attitude or method. Are we to believe that truth has been disclosed all at once in the past by some miraculous process of revelation, or are we to believe that truth is disclosed little by little by the wholly natural and infinitely laborious process of observation, investigation and experimentation? Is knowledge something that is definite in amount and determined in character, or is it something which is ever growing and unfolding as man penetrates deeper and deeper into the constitution of things? Are we living in a world, wherein all things past, present and future, have been disclosed, or are

we living in a world which, as Immanuel Kant put it so vividly, is but a little island of the known, washed on every shore by the vast waters of the unknown? Is the book of wisdom, written, closed and sealed for all eternity, or is page after page still being written with the blood and tears of striving men? Here in this matter not of fact but of attitude, not of conclusion but of method, not of letter but of spirit, is the real issue in this three centuries' old conflict between science and theology. And it is an issue, let me state with all possible emphasis, which has been definitely decided on the side of science. Dr. Draper in his *History of the Conflict Between Religion and Science* and Dr. Andrew D. White in his *History of the Warfare of Science with Theology*, have together demonstrated that, on every point where these two great interests have joined battle, science has emerged triumphant. And it is this which the religion of to-morrow, unlike most of the religion of to-day, is going to recognise and acclaim. The new religion of the future, as I have said, will be a scientific religion. It will abandon to science once for all the entire world of natural phenomena, and accept as the basis of its own teachings the facts which science discovers and establishes. It will abandon, in its own particular fields of study, the whole theological method of deduction from à priori premises, and accept and practise the scientific method of induction from facts observed and tested. It will abandon that presumptuous idea of a full, final and infallible revelation which Herbert Spencer well dubbed "the impiety of the

pious," and accept that attitude of reverent and yet curious agnosticism which becomes a finite mind when brought face to face with an infinite universe. Above all, will it abandon its reverence of the past as the repository of divine truth, and look forward confidently to the future for the apprehension of those hidden realities which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived." The religion of to-morrow will have no quarrel with science, nor science with religion. On the contrary, these two traditional antagonists will become colleagues, working side by side, in one common spirit of devotion, for the discovery of truth and the enlargement of life. And this new alliance, in place of the old hostility, will mean at least three momentous changes for the religion of to-morrow.

(1) First of all, it will mean the end of those numerous superstitions which have ever been the accompaniment of the religious sentiment, and have made religion quite as much a source of fear as of comfort to the human heart. Out of the centuries gone by have survived a thousand and one extraordinary ideas about man's history in the past and his destiny in the future. Some of these superstitions are based on ancient legends of the race, the origin of which no man knoweth at this time — some are the consequence of dogmatic speculation or malevolent invention — all are the hideous brood of ignorance and fear. And all are put to flight by the scientific spirit which deals with facts and not with fables. In this sense, the science

of our time must be regarded as the great liberator of the soul from the bondage of superstition into the freedom of reality. The more we know the universe, the more do we find that its laws are to be trusted — “that its ways are ways of pleasantness and all its paths are peace.” Consider, if you will, the theological bogies that have been shattered, the ecclesiastical tyrannies that have been overthrown, the human terrors that have been dissipated, not only by the facts which science has revealed to us but by the method which it has taught us, and at once you will see the beneficent contribution which it has made to the religion of to-morrow.

(2) In the second place, this union of science and religion will end the reign of authority in the realm of things spiritual. “The decline of reliance upon absolute authority,” says Dr. Eliot, in his *The Religion of the Future*, “is one of the most significant phenomena of our time.” This decline is to be seen everywhere — in government, in education, in business, in the family. But nowhere is it more marked than in the church. The present generation has learned to distrust any theory of the world which places authority in a book, or an institution, or a creed; and this distrust is destined to increase, until it has been transformed into out-and-out disbelief. Science is teaching once for all that reason is the only criterion of truth — and the mind of man therefore the only genuine seat of authority. All of which means that the religion of to-morrow, like the science of to-day, will be free from all external pressure,

and thus be guided and controlled by nothing but the inward impulse of the inquiring spirit.

(3) And lastly, the establishment of a scientific religion will mean the end of all bigotry and dogmatism. No longer will the religious mind be closed to new inquiry, and the religious hand be lifted to smite the new inquirer. On the contrary, the religion of tomorrow will be as open to fresh revelations of God's truth as any department of science which is known to our age. Such persecution as the Catholic church visited upon Copernicus, Galileo and Kepler because of their searching of the heavens — such opposition as the Protestant church offered to Darwin, Huxley and Spencer because of their discovery and formulation of the doctrine of evolution — will be utterly impossible in the new religion which is even now dawning upon the world. Thomas More, in his *Utopia*, prophesied very definitely regarding the religion of the future. In some things he was right, and in some things wrong. But his vision was as accurate as it was beautiful when he said of the Utopians — "This is one of their laws, that no man ought to be punished for his religion. . . . Every man might be of what religion he pleased, and might draw others to it by the force of argument, and by amicable and modest ways, but without bitterness against those of other opinions. This law was made not only for preserving the public peace, but because . . . the interest of religion itself required it."

II. When we have said that the new religion will be a scientific religion, we have named only the first of

many changes that are destined to take place in the gradual transition from the present to the future. As a further characteristic of this new religion, I would here name, in the second place, the moral sentiment. The religion of the future will not only be scientific, but it will also be dominated by the ethical as contrasted with the theological point of view. Not much longer will the church content itself with maintaining sacraments and rites and ceremonials of one kind and another as the talismans of salvation. Not much longer will it point to creeds and rituals as the *sine qua non* of religious faith. Already have the great masses of mankind in our age and generation decided that these things have nothing essentially to do with religion in itself, and, by severing their connection with the church, given evidence of their contempt for an institution which does those things which it ought not to do, and leaves undone those things which it ought to do. The vital thing in religion, we know to-day, is not faith, but character — not acceptance of creeds, but obedience to the moral law — not conformity to theological tenets and ecclesiastical obligations, but glad and free allegiance to the spiritual ideals of the soul. Not what a man believes or does not believe — not what he thinks or does not think about the birth of Jesus, the resurrection of the body, or the fall of man — not what he does or does not do in relation to the traditional church practices of worship, prayer and praise — but what a man is as a man — the purity of his private life, the justice and generosity of his relations with his fellowmen, the quick-

ness of his sympathies, the sincerity of his convictions, the integrity of his word and bond — this is the true test of religion. Character is the great thing in the practical life of the present day, and this will be the essential thing, we may be sure, in the religion of tomorrow. Creeds and rituals and confessions — all these are fated to disappear; and in their places will remain the moral sentiment as the all-sufficient content of religion.

If we desire any particular evidence of the certainty of this transition from theology to morality, from creed to character, we find it in abundance in the great revival movement of the Rev. "Billy" Sunday, which is now arousing such interest throughout the country. This crusade has of course all the outward characteristics of the traditional revivals of the past. There is the same crude theological teachings, the same clever understanding of mob psychology, the same insistent appeal to prejudice and fear. But he who thinks that "Billy" Sunday is a mere reincarnation of Whitefield and Evans — that this revival is only a duplication on a somewhat larger and more vulgar scale of the great revivals of the days gone by — is very much deceived. The one thing that is most remarkable about this movement, to my mind, is not the personal power of Mr. Sunday, not the marvellous machinery of organisation which he has perfected, not the number of converts whom he brings to "the saw-dust trail," but the extraordinary fact that here, amid all these traditional and old-fashioned surroundings, there is being struck an



insistent note which has never been sounded before in orthodox revivals. "Billy" Sunday thinks that he is absolutely faithful to "the old-time religion." Nothing would shock him more than to be told that he is himself a triumphant representative of that very kind of new religion which he attacks with such bitterness and hate. He uses all the old phrases, plays all the old tricks, handles all the old paraphernalia. But at the bottom of his work, all the same, is not theology, not conversion, not faith in Jesus, not acceptance of the cross, but, *mirabile dictu!* the moral life. The one thing that "Billy" Sunday seems to be genuinely interested in, is getting people to be decent. He spits his venom upon those who, as liberals, identify religion and morality. He ridicules, denounces and insults those who declare that conduct and character are the great things. He asserts with unexampled vividness of phrase, that belief in "Christ and him crucified" is the only road to salvation. But all this is mere imitation of ancient models — mere "sound and fury signifying nothing." What he really cares about, as I have said, is to get people to be moral — to be good parents of their children, to be honest citizens in the community, to be clean in their personal life, to stop drinking, to avoid sensuality, to "cut out" frivolity, pleasure-seeking, and selfish indulgence, to pay their bills, to care for their homes, to destroy the liquor traffic, to clean up the town, to be decent generally. All of which means that the Rev. "Billy" Sunday is not half as orthodox as he thinks he is! In spite of all the igno-

rance, vulgarity, cheap tricks and wild talk, this man is a leader of liberalism, and is the most convincing evidence of which I know, that the new religion will magnify not theology but the moral sentiment, and thus be primarily interested not in what a man believes but in what he is!

III. If "Billy" Sunday is the most brilliant kind of witness to this second characteristic of the new religion, he must be described, on the other hand, as the poorest kind of representative of a third characteristic, of which I must now speak. The new religion, as I have said, will be strictly ethical and not theological in character; but it will emphasise a type of moral life, which has never played any great part in the history of traditional Christianity, and which has no convincing example, so far as I know, outside of the prophetic tradition of ancient Israel. I refer to the fact that the religion of to-morrow is going to be a religion of social, as contrasted with individual, morality. The foreshadowing of this extraordinary development from the idea of the individual soul to the idea of the political, industrial and economic society in which the soul has place, is seen in all of those various social reform movements of our time which constitute our age, as it has been so often called, "the age of the social question." In the old days, all stress was laid upon the individual as such. The principles of individual initiative, individual activity, individual responsibility, and individual salvation, were worked, figuratively speaking, to death. "Each man for himself,

and the devil take the hindmost," this was the great axiom of life in education, in politics, in economics, and, by no means least of all, in religion. "Billy" Sunday's work is a perfect illustration of what I mean in this regard. Here he is as old-fashioned and traditional as you please. His appeal is fundamentally moral and not theological, as I have ventured to point out — which is new; but this appeal is aimed straight at the isolated individual — which is as old as the pernicious doctrine of future retribution. Never once does he strike the social note, or sound the social challenge. Save yourself, is the whole burden of his message!

In other fields of activity, however, if not to any great extent in religion, a revolutionary change in this regard is taking place. We are awakening to-day to the full import of the great principle, laid down by St. Paul, so many centuries ago, that "no man liveth unto himself." No man, we are now coming gradually to see, can be saved alone. He is not saved, if he himself gains a position of security, only to leave behind and abandon to their fate the great mass of men. To save ourselves is to save others. The process of service, sacrifice and death for others' sakes is itself the process of salvation. As John Greenleaf Whittier has put it so effectively in his familiar couplet:

"Heaven's gate is closed to him who comes alone,  
Save thou a soul and it shall save thine own."

But this is not the whole of our discovery, by any

means. Beyond this, and infinitely more important, is the discovery that men cannot be saved as individuals, apart from the material and moral conditions of the environment in which they live. To save a slum population from physical degeneration, moral corruption and spiritual atrophy, we must not merely educate and redeem the individual men and women, but first and foremost, wipe out the slum. To save the little children who crowd our juvenile courts, we must not merely punish, teach and inspire the separate boys and girls, but we must change their gutters into playgrounds, their tenement abodes into homes of light, their scanty food into abundant nourishment, their wretched pleasures into wholesome recreation. To save our drunkards, prostitutes and gunmen, we must not so much rear mission-houses, rescue stations and reformatories, as smash the saloons, abolish cruel and indecent conditions of labour, establish the minimum wage, solve the vexed problem of unemployment, wipe out the curse of poverty. Already we are convinced that the physical diseases of our people are due almost exclusively to bad environment — that such ills as tuberculosis, typhoid fever, and infant mortality, for example, can never be conquered until the multitudes live and labour under conditions which are at least human. And in the same way are we beginning to learn that the moral ills of our people are rooted in the same polluted soil of environment. Religion, like education, is no longer blind to the moral and spiritual results of social maladjustment, industrial oppression, political injustice. Which

means that the religion of to-morrow, like the religion of to-day in a few scattered churches of the land, will be a religion of social change. The new religion will concern itself not with theological error, or ecclesiastical non-conformity, or even moral delinquency, but with the crying evils of social disorganisation which fill our hospitals with the sick, our asylums with the feeble-minded and insane, our streets and tenements with the poor, our prisons and reformatories with the vicious and depraved. It will take up the fight against poverty, bad conditions of labour, low wages and long hours, indecent tenements and noisome slums, commercialised vice, rotten politics, selfish business, inequitable taxation, war. It will concern itself not so much with the individual, as with the social environment which has so largely made the individual what he actually is. It will centre attention not so much upon fitting men for the life beyond the grave, as upon fitting the life that is upon this side of the grave for the decent happiness and welfare of humanity. It will devote itself not so much to the kingdom of heaven that may some day be discovered far off in the distant skies, as to the kingdom of heaven that may any day be actually established right here and now upon the earth. Now is the day of the Lord! Here is, or may be, holy ground! The kingdom of heaven is at hand! This is the message of this new socialised religion of to-morrow which, in the space of a single generation, I believe, is destined so largely to displace the old individualised religion of to-day and yesterday. All of which means that, in God's

good time, will be fulfilled the immortal prayer of Jesus — “Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven!”

IV. This brings me directly to the last point in regard to the new religion. If this religion is to assume, to any very great extent, the characteristics which I have described, it is evident, is it not, that most of those features which have led to so many, if not all, of the religious disputations of the past, will disappear? The history of religion, as we unfortunately know all too well, is one long and almost uninterrupted story of controversy, conflict, persecution and warfare. The “one holy church,” which every seer has beheld “in rapt vision,” has forever split itself up into hundreds of factions, sects, denominations, each one of which has been anathema to every other. People have been unable to unite upon the articles of a creed, the order of a ritual, or the character of a vestment. They have been unable to tell, for example, whether God the Son is correctly described as *homoousion*, or *homoiousion*. They have been unable to agree as to whether the bread and wine of the Lord’s Supper is the actual body and blood of Christ, or is only the symbol of these realities. They have failed utterly to come to an understanding upon the question as to whether there should be three or four buttons on a certain ecclesiastical garment, or no buttons at all. And since these matters are of great importance, from the theological point of view at least, men have disputed, and fought, and slain. With the result pointed out by John Morley, in his biography

of Voltaire, that "more human blood has been violently shed (in the cause of religion) than in any other cause whatsoever."

Now in the new religion all these occasions of theological wrangling and discussion will have no place. In their stead will come, as we have seen, the interests of science, the standards of morality, and the ideals of social change. All the differing forms of the new religion will be actuated by a common spirit, impelled by a common interest, and directed to a common end. Which means — paradoxical as it may appear — that there will be no differing forms of this new religion! Religions, which have always been so "many," will slowly become merged into that "one" religion, which has ever been so apparent in essence but never yet has appeared in outward form. The religion of to-morrow, in other words, will be a *universal religion*. Men will differ in opinion and outlook, as they have always differed. Different nationalities and races will have their distinctive languages and ceremonials of worship. Different philosophies will develop distinctive interpretations of moral truth and social good. Prophets, new and old, will have their separate groups of followers, and build their separate churches. But sects as such will be unknown; controversies, save for the love of truth, will disappear; and religious warfare, that last infamy of human ignorance and folly, will become nothing but a dreadful memory of ancient and less lovely days. Men will behold, with ever more clearness, the one God who is in all and through all and over all.

They will feel, with ever greater intensity, the spiritual kinship that binds them together into one great family of this one God. They will hail together and work together for the coming of that kingdom of God in which men "from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south," shall sit down together as brothers and comrades. Every name of God will be welcome to our ears, every prayer will express our aspirations, every prophet will be our leader, every altar will be our home. Religion will at last be one as God is one, as the universe is one, as the heart of man is one. "We have grown up under different influences," ~~says William Ellery Channing.~~ "We have different names. . . . Diversities of opinion incline us to worship under different roofs, or diversities of taste or habits, to worship with different forms. But if we purpose solemnly to do God's will, we are one church, and nothing can divide us."

W. E. C.

Such, so far as I can foresee it, will be the new religion. It will be first of all a religion of science — which means a religion cleansed of superstition, freed from authority, and redeemed from intolerance! Secondly, it will be a religion not of theology but of morality — which means a religion indifferent to creeds and rituals, and supremely interested in character. Thirdly, it will be a socialised religion — which means a religion dedicated not to the salvation of the individual in the world to come, but to the salvation of the individual in the world that now is by the transformation of this world from iniquity into righteousness.



And lastly, it will be a universal religion — which means a religion of one humanity, united before one altar, in the worship of one God.

I have called this the new religion! In the highest and truest sense it is the old religion also, for it is this religion which all good men have taught and practised since first the world began. This is the one religion about which I had so much to say at the beginning of this address. It is new to-day — or to-morrow! — only as it is at last coming to its own after long, long centuries of obscurity, misunderstanding and abuse. One of the greatest of all religious leaders, Theodore Parker, who taught this new religion “pure and undefiled,” summed up the whole problem when he traced his teachings straight back to the “prophet souls of all the years,” and then, in his last days, declared, “The religion I preach will be the religion of enlightened men for the next thousand years!”

## **STATEMENTS OF PRINCIPLE**



## TRUTH, NOT TRADITION

IN entering upon a discussion of the principles of the new religion of our day, there are two roads which may be followed. On the one hand, we may consider the specific doctrines which are characteristic of this religion — its idea of God, its conception of man, its hope of immortality. In other words, we may define the theology of the new religion. On the other hand, we may consider the principles of this religion — the ethical foundations upon which it is reared and the spiritual heights to which it aspires. Without discussing any of its particular doctrines, we may consider simply those general ideas of thought and life of which these doctrines are the outcome and expression. We may inquire, that is, not how the new religion differs from the old in the articles of its creed, but how it differs from the old in its whole attitude and spirit.

Now it is this second road which I propose to follow in this address; and the first step upon this road I find to be the affirmation that the new religion, as contrasted with the old, is a religion of truth, and not of tradition — a contrast which has a deeper and more permanent significance than we commonly understand. We are living in an age which has come to appreciate the supreme value of truth, and which is dominated therefore by no passion stronger than the passion to

find the truth. We understand to-day that the patient, courageous, and unceasing search for truth is one of the most inspiring achievements in the history of mankind, and that without this search, we should still be living as barbarians in an age of barbarism. The ideal of truth, in other words, has become in our time a common-place, and the path to truth a smooth and well-travelled road. Every man to-day claims to be a lover of the truth, and manifests, to some extent at least, what Mr. Lecky calls "the essential characteristics of the spirit of the truth." He will "pause," that is, "before accepting any doubtful assertion, he will carefully balance opposing arguments, he will probe every anecdote with scrupulous care, he will endeavour to divest himself of every prejudice, he will cautiously abstain from attributing to probabilities the authority of certainties." All this he will do, because truth is now everywhere triumphant — so triumphant, that we find it difficult to realise that truth was one of the last ideals to gain the allegiance of the human soul, that the truth-seeker has been regarded in nearly every age as the enemy and not the friend of man, and that the search for truth until very recent times has never been conducted by the race as a whole, but only by those few great martyr-heroes who have not been afraid to die in order that humanity might live. Indeed, the love of truth is so new and rare a thing, that it is not too much to say that there have been only two periods in the history of the western world when it really found any very general recognition.

In the first place, there is that marvellous epoch of enlightenment and culture, which we find in the Athens of the fifth century before Christ. Here in a period scarcely two generations long, we find a group of intellectual giants who stand unrivalled in later ages of human history, and who are the dominating figures in a period pre-eminently distinguished for its investigations and discoveries of truth. It was the age of Protagoras and the Sophists, who asked in reverence, what Pontius Pilate is regarded to have asked in jest, "What is truth?" It was the age of Anaxagoras, who boldly declared that the sun was not the golden chariot of the god of day, but only a red-hot stone, and who was banished from Attica for the temerity of his utterance. It was the age of Hippocrates, who took the first steps in scientific medicine. It was the age of Socrates, the apostle of knowledge; of Plato, the philosopher of idealism; and of Aristotle, first to study scientifically the phenomena of the natural world. It was an age of such unexampled intellectual activity and achievement, that the history of practically every branch of human learning has its beginning with these ancient Greeks. For the first time in the history of our race, we find the pursuit of truth a passion, and loyalty to truth a confessed religion.

The second great period of enlightenment was that which opened in the early days of the fifteenth century, and which is fittingly described as the period of the Renaissance or "Revival of Learning." It is interesting to notice that this period of renewed search for

truth was immediately dependent upon that period of Athenian glory, which I have just described. For twelve centuries or more, Europe, like the sleeping beauty in the wood, had been slumbering under the paralysing spells of mediævalism. Then there came, like the prince in the fairy-tale, partly from the Jews, partly from the Mohammedans, and partly from the Grecian fugitives from the east, the restoration of the writings of Plato and Aristotle which the world of Christendom had totally forgotten during the period of the Dark Ages. And lo! in an instant, the mind of Europe was awake. And what an age of revival and even revolution it was! It was the age which saw Marco Polo travel east into Asia, Columbus sail west to America, and Vasco da Gama sail south around the continent of Africa. It was the age which saw Copernicus and Galileo and Kepler study the movements of the heavenly bodies, and overthrow the fallacies of the Ptolemaic theory of the universe. It was the age which saw Gassendi, by his investigation of atoms, lay the foundation of chemistry; and Harvey, by his discovery of the circulation of the blood, lay the foundation of physiology. It was the age which saw the beginnings of modern philosophy in the writings of Descartes, and the resurrection of science in the *Novum Organum* of Bacon. It was the age which saw the emancipation of scholarship in the rebirth of such universities as those of Paris and Oxford, and in the persons of such scholars as Colet, Erasmus, and Thomas More. Above all, it was the age which witnessed the cataclysm of the

Reformation, which swept through the realms of Catholicism like a convulsive earthquake, shattering the power of the ecclesiastical hierarchy in England, Holland, Germany, and Switzerland, and making possible the great movement of Protestantism. It was the age of scepticism and doubt and fresh inquiry. All the accepted knowledge of the world was placed beneath the microscope of investigation, and pitilessly tested as to its validity. Traditions were thrown to the winds, dogmas were flouted and scorned, nothing was accepted which could not pass the examination of the reason. Men were seeking for the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. For the first time since the days of Periclean Athens, men were looking about them, staring the world in the face, putting every doctrine on trial for its life, subjecting every theory to merciless scrutiny and torture, thinking in all things for themselves. And instead of holding fast to the old things simply because they were old and had been accepted by the fathers, they began to try all things, and hold fast only to those which were good. The Renaissance was in truth a rebirth. Nay more!—it was the resurrection of the human reason, which had its birth, we may say, in the age of Pericles, and which had met its crucifixion in the dark days of Rome and the Middle Ages.

This second period of enlightenment, which had its dawning in the fourteenth century, so far from reaching its close, as did the corresponding period of earlier times, within the space of a few generations, is just now in the flood-tide of its glory. The search for truth,



which the leaders of the Renaissance set on foot in their times of storm and stress, has been continued unremittingly from their day to our own, and is being prosecuted more faithfully to-day than ever before. The nineteenth century was pre-eminently a century of truth-seeking. Every possible sphere of human knowledge has been investigated during the last one hundred years, to its remotest part, and the pages of learning written all anew. And not only have a myriad new facts been added to our store of information, not only have new theories of the universe and human life been established, but what is infinitely more important, the validity of truth and the obligation of finding truth have been forever impressed upon humanity. Never again can the love of truth be lost; never again can the search for truth be abandoned! Humanity is now committed to this goal as to the noblest of all ideals, and it will march on and on, and ever on, until the deepest depths have been sounded, the highest pinnacles scaled, and the farthest bounds attained. Forever now shall humanity cry out,

"O star of truth, down-shining,  
Lead on, I'll follow thee."

Whatever may have been the struggle of truth, therefore, in the past, to gain a place in the human heart, and however prolonged and dark may have been that period between the first era of intellectual illumination and the second, there is no longer any doubt as to the absolute character of her victory. Truth as an ideal

is now established so that it shall never pass away. The torch of knowledge has been kindled with so mighty a flame that it can never again be extinguished. That element, without which nothing henceforth can hope to endure for a single instant, is conformity to truth! — and this is as true of religion as of everything else. A religion which can hold the confidence of the modern man must be a religion which is founded upon the basis of truth and is inspired throughout by the love of truth. Indeed, there is many a man to-day who has no religion other than his absolute devotion to the truth, and who would therefore refuse to recognise anything as a religion which did not sanctify this devotion with its blessing. And yet it is just this devotion to the truth — this “earnestness of inquiry” which Mr. Lecky describes as “the essential characteristic of the love of truth” — which organised Christianity has not only refused to bless, but has actually cursed with the most awful anathemas which she could frame.

For the relentless truth-seeker, who cares nothing about the dogmas and traditions of yesterday, and concerns himself only with what his reasoning faculties are telling him about the universe and human life to-day, the Christian church has no place whatsoever. Now, as always in the past, the church banishes from her altars the man who asks a question, raises a doubt, or starts an investigation. What could be more significant than the fact that the Dark Ages, when learning was at its lowest ebb and the light of reason was burning with the feeblest of flames, when all the splendid

knowledge of the pagan world was lost and man knew less and cared less about the world in which he was living than at any other time perhaps in human history, when mankind was the unresisting victim of all manner of fears and superstitions, were coincident with that period of Christian history when the church was everywhere supreme, when her cardinals dominated the court of every king and her priests occupied the teaching chairs in every school and university? What could be more impressive than this fact, unless it be the further fact that every forward step which has been taken since the period of the Renaissance has been taken in spite of the church's bitter opposition, and has been successfully carried through in the face of her cruel and relentless persecution? Read such a book as Dr. Andrew D. White's *History of the Warfare Between Science and Theology*, and see how the Christian church has been fighting one losing battle after another in every field of learning, during the past three hundred years, and has been driven from one line of entrenchments, only to retreat and give battle all over again in the next. Nothing is more melancholy than the fact that nearly all the great scholars of the sixteenth, seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries were able to find no place within the pale of Christianity, and therefore did their immortal work outside instead of inside the church. Take simply the more familiar names of the great leaders of the world's thought in the last one hundred years — such men as Darwin, Huxley, Tyn-dall, Spencer, Mill, Renan, Lyell, Wallace, Herschel,

Hooker, to name only a few — and we find that almost without exception these illustrious friends of humanity, loyal seekers for the truth, devoted servants of God, were the outcasts of the Christian world. Just think of such a fact as that to which Dr. Moncure D. Conway calls attention in his *Autobiography*, that “the three men who chiefly moulded the thought of their generation in England and America were all trained for the pulpit — Darwin, Carlyle, and Emerson; and they were all shut out of it by their intellectual honesty and the inability of the churches to recognise the superiority of a great living oracle to the creeds of defunct crania.”

What wonder, in the face of such facts as these, that there have been men who have soberly declared that Christianity has been more of a curse than a blessing to the human race, and that if every church could be closed to-day and every pulpit left forever empty, humanity would gain immeasurably more than she would lose!

Indeed, from the standpoint of the present age, which understands and appreciates the essential validity of truth, nothing is more tragic than this phase of Christian history; and nothing is more natural than the most unsparing condemnation of the church for her unwavering attitude of hostility. And yet, to the advocate of the church, nothing could be more unjust than such a condemnation as this. The church, you say, the enemy of truth and the persecutor of truth-seekers? Not at all! The church, if she is hostile to anything, is hostile only to error; and if she has persecuted anybody, has persecuted only those who have

taught error and thus have sought to lead the minds of men astray. The truth? Why, the church has the truth in her own especial keeping, and has had it there for hundreds of years! The truth is already known in all its fulness through the special revelation of God himself to the patriarchs and prophets and apostles of old; and therefore is all this so-called search for truth in our day only so much unbelief, which is to be condemned as dangerous to the welfare of the human soul. The church, in other words, has always asserted just what she asserts to-day, that God has revealed truth once and for all, that this truth is preserved in what she calls her sacred tradition, and that no further revelation is therefore necessary or to be expected. Anything in the researches of the scientists and philosophers, which is in contradiction to the tradition of the church, is to be regarded not as truth merely because it is new, but, for that very reason, if for no other, is to be regarded as error. The church, in a word, simply points to her tradition, as this tradition is embodied in scriptures and in creeds, asserts that all truth is to be found there and nowhere else, and refuses to recognise the epoch-making achievements of the last three hundred years as anything more than so many grievous mistakes, and "the passion of truth-seeking," which has been responsible for these achievements, as anything more than envy and deceit.

Here, now, between the position of the church and that of the world at large, do we find the sharpest possible contradiction; and yet both positions are deter-

mined by allegiance to what is called the truth. Here is the church offering her tradition as true, and here is the world offering its modern scientific discoveries as true. Here is the church declaring that truth was all revealed centuries ago by a supernatural process of revelation, and here is the world declaring that truth is being revealed here and now by the wholly natural process of investigation and research. Here is the church describing the disciple of truth as one who asks no questions, raises no doubts, and accepts obediently what is given him from the past, and here is the world describing the disciple of truth as one who doubts everything which is unsupported by trustworthy evidence, who accepts nothing which does not commend itself to his reason, who has little reverence for prejudice or tradition, and above all, is characterised by the spirit of earnest and free inquiry. Here is the most radical kind of disagreement — disagreement so radical that the church has been forced to declare war upon the world, and the world upon the church, and both in the name of truth! Each takes up its arms and shouts that it comes "to bear witness to the truth!" And what wonder is it, in the face of this contention, that we find the question of "jesting Pilate" springing to our lips — "What is truth?"

Now in seeking to answer this question, and thus to determine the age-long battle between science and theology, we find that there are just two possible ways out of our difficulty, and that each involves an undisguised affirmation of faith in the reality of something

which cannot by any possibility be demonstrated. In other words, as a pure act of faith, we must accept the contention of the church, or we must accept the contention of the scientific world. We cannot accept both, nor can we find any middle ground between them.

In the one case, we will do what Mr. Gosse did, when he found himself faced by this dilemma. Readers of Mr. Edmund Gosse's remarkable book, entitled *Father and Son*, will remember the problem by which the elder Gosse found himself confronted. On the one hand, this man was an ardent Calvinist, a devoted student of Christian tradition, and an unquestioning believer in all the familiar doctrines of the most extreme type of orthodox Protestantism. On the other hand, Mr. Gosse was an able and well-trained geologist, who had for years conducted original investigations of the earth strata on the western coast of England, and who was familiar with all the revolutionary discoveries in the geological field of Sir Charles Lyell and his contemporaries. On the one hand, as he read the book of *Genesis*, every word of which he believed to be directly inspired by God, he was taught that all things were created by the Almighty within a period of six days, at a time not more than six thousand years ago. On the other hand, as he read Lyell's *Principles of Geology* and studied the earth formations for himself, he was taught that the earth had been in existence for unnumbered millions of years, and had reached its present state through a process of evolution, almost every step of which was recorded in the formation of the soil,

Now, here, right in Gosse's own life, was the stupendous contradiction between tradition and science, of which I have spoken; and in the apparent confusion, there was only one thing which he believed to be finally and forever true — namely the *Genesis* statement, that “in six days Jehovah made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is.” This must be true, regardless of everything else! But, if this be the case, what about the evidences in the soil of progressive development through millions of years? What about the glacial fissures and scratches on the cliffs, the piles of lava from extinct volcanoes, the fossils of every sort in every part of the earth, the foot-tracks of birds and reptiles moulded in the rocks, the skeletons of mammoths and dinosaurs and other prehistoric creatures? What do all these things mean? Nothing, said Mr. Gosse! They can mean nothing in the face of “the one clear and undisputed witness on the opposite side” — the first chapter of *Genesis*. All these geological remains are simply “appearances,” and as such they were brought into being, just as they stand to-day, during the six days of creation, and are to be taken as having no significance whatever. If we want to read into them any such story of evolution as they seem to teach, why we do this at our own risk. God has told us that he made the world in a week's time some six thousand years ago, and nothing that the earth contains, or seems to contain, can be accepted as a refutation of that statement, which embodies the whole of truth.

It is seldom that we find the conflict between science



and theology so completely embodied in a single life as in the case of Mr. Gosse; and here, in his career, do we have a perfect illustration of one way out of the difficulty which is before us. Mr. Gosse had implicit faith in the tradition of the church as the test of truth, and believed that this one witness counter-balanced everything which might be brought forward upon the other side. If any fact in nature — a scratch upon a cliff or a buried fossil — contradicted the church's tradition, then the fact and not the tradition was to be rejected.

But always have there been men who have found it impossible to follow this easy way out of the contradiction between science and theology. Such a man was Thomas Huxley. Like Gosse, he was familiar with the tradition of the church; like Gosse, he was familiar with the wonderful discoveries of modern science; but unlike Gosse, he could not make himself believe that these geological and biological remains were merely "appearances," signifying nothing. He could not believe, for example, when the tracks of birds and reptiles were found in the soil, when fossilised bones were discovered in certain caves bearing the very marks of hyenas' teeth, when even the skeleton of a Siberian mammoth had been unearthed with lumps of fossilised flesh bearing the marks of wolves' teeth, that these things did not tell the story that they seemed to tell — that God had arbitrarily created such extraordinary phenomena for no other purpose than that of telling a deceptive tale. Huxley found it impossible to believe, in other words,

that the world is made up of a succession of isolated phenomena, which at the best are mere "appearances." He found it necessary to believe that these phenomena were realities, or, more exactly, were the manifestations of some great, universal and eternal reality which lies behind. Every star that flames in its appointed pathway through the skies, every flower that blooms by the wayside, every ray of light that pierces the darkness, every wave that beats upon the shore, every fossil that is buried in the earth, every fissure that is carved in the rock — everything points to something beyond itself of which it is the partial revelation.

The archæologist, for example, excavating in the sands of Egypt, brings to light some long-buried inscription of the Pharaohs. The surface of the stone bears nothing but a confusion of straight and crooked lines, having as little meaning apparently as the pencil-scratchings of a playing child. And yet the archæologist knows that those markings are not simply a series of meaningless lines but are the carefully written letters of an alphabet, which spell to posterity the message of some great king. He knows, in other words, that behind those lines there is some truth. And so he examines and studies and thinks, he adjusts and compares and experiments, he deciphers, with infinite labour and patience, one letter after another; until at last the alphabet is known, the language revealed, the words made to speak their hidden message. And so with this world of ours. As he gazed out upon this wonderful universe, Huxley had faith to believe that each phe-

nomenon therein was a letter of the great message of eternal truth; and looking within, into his own soul, Huxley had faith to believe that his reason was a key which was fitted to translate the mystery. Just as Pharaoh had written his inscription upon the piece of granite, so God has written his truth upon the pages of the universe. And just as the archæologist, by the exercise of his reason, deciphered that inscription and read its message, so the scientist, by the exercise of his reason, can decipher God's inscriptions in star and ocean, in flower and cliff, and reveal it to mankind. Huxley, in other words, refused to believe that nature lied; he had the faith of Wordsworth, that "Nature never did betray the heart that loved her." Huxley refused also to believe that the human reason was deceptive; he had the faith of the ancient Greeks that it was the compass-needle pointing to the pole star of truth. If a choice is necessary, therefore, said Huxley, between the revelation of God as written in the book of *Genesis*, and the revelation of God as written in the book of Nature, if I cannot accept both because of their mutual contradictions, if I must have faith in one to the exclusion of the other, then I prefer to accept the revelation of the world of Nature. And if I must choose between the testimony of church tradition and the testimony of my own reason, then I choose my reason, as a great act of faith in the integrity of the faculties with which I have been endowed by my creator; for I cannot believe that God would wilfully endow me with a faculty which had no other function than that of leading me astray.

Now this is the way out of the contradiction between theology and science, as I need not emphasise, which the modern world has chosen to follow. Whether this way is right or not, I am not now trying to demonstrate. I am merely pointing out that, as between Gosse's faith in the integrity of the book of *Genesis*, interpreted through the creeds, and Huxley's faith in the integrity of the book of Nature, interpreted through the human reason, it has chosen the latter. During the long period of the Dark Ages, the reason of man, as we have seen, was dead, or slumbering. Credulity of the most superstitious kind was the universal state of mind, and therefore the whole tradition of the church, from Ptolemy's system of the stars to Augustine's great drama of the atonement, was accepted without question. Then, under the magic influence of the Revival of Learning, there came the awakening of the human intellect. Man began to look about him, to examine the world in which he lived, to face the facts of life! And lo! the more he studied and investigated, the more numerous became the contradictions which he discerned between the world as it actually existed before his face and eyes, and the world as the church said that it existed. Between the teachings of tradition, in other words, and the teachings of the active reason, the gulf grew ever wider; and, compelled to choose, seeing that no reconciliation was possible, seeing that tradition must yield to reason or reason to tradition, the world gave its allegiance to the reason. It recognised clearly enough, to quote Mr. Conway again, "the superiority

of a great living oracle to the creeds of defunct crania." It recognised that it was easier to believe that there was a mistake in the church tradition than that Nature was a lie and the reason a deceptive faculty. It recognised that, if God had ever spoken to mankind, he must still be speaking — as the poet has put it, "God is not dumb, that he should speak no more" — and that man's latest apprehension of God's word must be nearer the truth of things than his earliest. And the choice thus made between tradition and the reason has been affirmed ever more strongly with the passing years, until we can see, as is conclusively shown in Dr. Andrew D. White's great book, that it is the verdict of history and of experience that the church has lost her case.

Under these circumstances, it is evident, is it not, that the new religion must be a religion founded upon truth, in the modern scientific sense of that word, and not a religion founded upon tradition? Whatever may have been the case in the past, tradition can never again hold the allegiance and respect of men. For what is this thing that we call tradition, after all? What authority does it wield and what sanctity does it carry? Is it the full, the final, and the infallible revelation of Almighty God, with which the feeble knowledge of mankind is to be silenced and confounded? On the contrary, we know to-day that this tradition is only the memory of what men thought about this world in the third, the fourth and the fifth centuries after Christ. We know that this tradition is nothing less than the embalmed and mummified ideas which were active in

men's minds a thousand and fifteen hundred years ago. And we know that the appeal to tradition is only an appeal from the "living truths" of our time to the "defunct crania" of eight, ten, and fifteen centuries ago. And when we are asked to choose between what men thought about this world in the fourth century, for example, and what they think about this world in the twentieth century, when we are asked to choose between the dead ideas of a thousand years ago and the living ideas of this present moment, when we are asked to choose between the great students of yesterday and the similarly great students of to-day, can there be any hesitation in our choice?

The church's attempt to adhere to tradition is not an attempt to adhere to God, but simply an attempt to convince the world that the mediæval monks and priests knew more about the truth of things than the modern scholars in our great universities. Why, if the world should suddenly take it into its head to reject all the facts of modern astronomy and return to the astrology of the Chaldeans, if it should resolve to reject all modern medical knowledge and return to the witch doctors of the Middle Ages, if it should destroy all its railroads and steamships and telegraphs and telephones, and return to the means of conveyance and communication in vogue in the days of the great military highways of Imperial Rome, it could not do a more fatal and foolish thing than to reject the vast stores of modern knowledge in favour of the tradition of the creeds.

And yet, is it not just this preposterous demand

which the majority of churches are tacitly or avowedly making to-day upon the intelligence of man? Step into any orthodox church of our time, and at once you step out of the clear and bracing atmosphere of modern times into the damp and musty atmosphere of the Middle Ages. You hear phrases that are never used in any other place, you are bombarded with ideas which could not live in the sunlight and the open air, you are confronted by an interpretation of human history and a philosophy of human life which exist only as the Egyptian mummies exist in our museums. Said Emerson, in his Divinity School Address, more than seventy years ago, "Tradition characterises the preaching of the century — religion comes out of the memory and not out of the soul." And this is almost as true to-day as it was then. It is now three hundred years and more since the universality of natural law was established beyond all peradventure of a doubt; and yet, in the face of all the facts, the church still persists in clinging to her doctrine of miracles. It is now an even hundred years since the Biblical scholars made untenable the theory of the infallibility of the Scriptures; and yet when a rash clergyman declared at a meeting of the Episcopal Convention in Cincinnati, that the Bible could no longer be accepted as true and perfect in every part, there was an instant storm of protest, and a great assembly of presumably educated men solemnly reaffirmed their faith in the Bible as the inspired word of God. It is now a full half-century since it was proved, in so far as the human intellect can prove anything, that the

human race is not descended from a single pair which was created out of the dust, but ascended by the slow process of evolution, from lower forms of animal life; and yet, when Bishop Lawrence of Massachusetts ventured to suggest some years ago that the story of Adam and Eve was an allegory, a half dozen of the leading clergymen of New York, of various denominations, took occasion to re-assert their belief in this story as a piece of history. These doctrines, and all the others which make up the content of Christian tradition, are simply not true, they have all been refuted a thousand times, they are ignored in our schools and colleges, and laughed at in our newspapers; and yet the church still teaches them and asks men to accept them! I say to you, in all seriousness, that the church is disloyal to truth, she is engaged in the business of falsehood and deceit, she is a faithless witness unto God. "Christianity," said James Martineau, "has been mainly evolved from what is unhistorical in its traditions, mistaken in its perceptions, and misapprehended in the oracles of its prophets? . . . It consecrates a theory of the world's economy which is made up of illusions from obsolete stages of civilisation." And the result? The result, says Martineau, "is the spreading alienation of the intellectual classes of society from Christendom, and the detention of the rest in their spiritual culture at a level not much above that of the Salvation Army."

It is needless to point out, in conclusion, that the new religion will have nothing of all this. The new religion



will be the friend and not the foe of science, the ministers of this new religion will sit reverently at the feet of those who know and understand the mysteries of life, and the church of this new religion will fling away what Emerson calls "the hoarded treasures of old rubbish" with which her sanctuary is now encumbered, and put in their place the newest treasures that the world of modern learning has to offer. The new religion will receive and embody in herself all that modern science, modern history, modern philosophy have to teach. For the basis of her theology, she will look not to Paul nor to Peter nor to the apostolic fathers, but to Darwin and Spencer, Baur and Strauss, Faraday and Kelvin, and the other great scholars of our day. For the structure of theology, she will use not the material which was fashioned by the learning of Augustine and Jerome, or of Luther and Calvin, but the material which is being fashioned all anew to-day by the best scholars in the best universities of the present time. She will care not for the "defunct crania" of even the greatest men, but for the "living oracles" of the present hour. And, more than this, the new religion will always be ready to move with the progress of the times, to throw aside old theories as fast as they are discredited, and to accept new theories as fast as they are approved. Caring nothing for any prejudice however comfortable, and having reverence for no tradition however old, she will be moved always by the spirit of free inquiry, looking not to the past nor even to the present, but always to the future. She will believe that more light and truth

are yet to come out of God's holy word. She will seek to "know the truth," that she may "bear witness to the truth." And above all, she will welcome to her fold all seekers of the truth, that they may labour within and not without her portals.

And more than this even will she do. Not only will the new religion accept the truth as it is given, and open her gates to the seeker of the truth, but she will also teach the world that no religious life is perfect without the love of truth. She will teach that it is the duty of every man, who yearns to unite his soul with the divine spirit, to meet every problem of thought and life with the open mind. She will instruct her members not to ask, as questions arise, what does the church teach? what does the creed affirm? what did the fathers think? what do I want to think? — but to ask only, what is the truth? She will lay upon her ministers and laymen alike the obligation, not to defend the tradition, support the dogma, or stand by the faith, but the sacred and solemn obligation to defend and support and stand by the truth, as, God helping them, they find the truth. She will insist that membership in her communion is determined not by loyalty to what has been in the past, but by unswerving loyalty to what ought to be to-day, and what will be to-morrow. She will lay upon every soul the one command, Know the truth! — no matter how many traditions are shattered, how many treasures lost, or how many dreams dispelled.

This is the new religion, as the religion of truth. And it is this new religion which is destined to win

again the loyalty and the love of men. Ralph Waldo Emerson gave the conclusion of the whole matter many years ago, when he said — alas! that the church has not yet understood! — “Whenever a mind receives divine wisdom, old things pass away — tradition, texts, temples fall; the mind lives anew, and absorbs the past into the present hour. . . . If a man claims to know and speak of God, and then carries you back to the phraseology of some old mouldered nation in another country, believe him not. . . . Whence this worship of the past? The centuries are conspirators against the sanctity and authority of the soul. . . . Say, henceforward I am the truth’s — henceforward I obey no law less than the eternal law. I appeal from all your conventions and customs. I must be myself. I must follow truth.”

## LIBERTY, NOT AUTHORITY

LIBERTY has for so long been a battle-cry both in politics and religion, that it is astonishing to find how slow has been its progress in the history of the human race. It is only within a comparatively few years that the divine right of a man to be free has been recognised in the field of politics; and even at this late day this recognition has been granted only in those communities where enlightenment and culture have created conditions favourable to the propagation of individual independence. As for the field of religion, it needs no argument to prove that authority is still triumphant, and liberty almost everywhere unknown. The fact of the matter is that, while the battle for liberty in the political field is already far advanced and the fate of emperors and kings, lords and nobles, is written in the stars, the battle for religious liberty is only just begun, and the struggle against popes and bishops, synods and councils, is destined still to be bitter and long-continued. The throne of political authority is already tottering to its fall; but the throne of religious authority seems still to stand as firm as the everlasting hills. We must remember, however, that the battle for liberty is everywhere the same; and, in God's good time, will everywhere achieve the same great victory. Therefore if

we desire to learn what liberty is destined to mean in the religious field, we cannot do a wiser thing than turn, for a few moments, to the field of politics, and see what the fight for liberty has there involved, and what its victory has achieved for man!

“The struggle between liberty and authority,” says John Stuart Mill, in his essay on *Liberty*, “is the most conspicuous feature in the portions of history with which we are most familiar, particularly in those of Greece, Rome, and England”—a statement which he might very well have expanded to include all nations known to the memory of man. For it is not too much to say that the history of humanity is only the story of one long struggle for liberty against authority. Certainly this is the case in the field of government. In every country, as it emerges from the impenetrable darkness of remote antiquity, we find one uniform condition of associated life—on the one side, a vast homogeneous people, shorn of every element of what we know to-day as political freedom; and on the other side, one supreme individual, in whose hands reposes all authority over the men and women who live within the bounds of his inherited domain or beneath the sway of his conquering sword.

Of the origins of this supreme authority of the sovereign ruler, it is not necessary at this time to speak. The studies of modern anthropology and sociology have traced out the beginnings of political headship with almost as great a degree of exactitude as geology, for example, has traced out the beginnings of this planet

upon which we live; and the whole story is told, for those who desire to read it, in such books as Tylor's *Primitive Culture*, Sir Henry Maine's *Ancient Laws*, and Herbert Spencer's *Principles of Sociology*. It is sufficient for us to remember the simple fact that when history begins, we find, in all countries, the king exercising supreme sovereignty over his people, and this sovereignty supported by the universally accepted theory that the king is at once the blood descendant and the personal representative of the gods. The people, in other words, have a king, and obey him without complaint, because they believe that he rules by what is called "divine right."

We cannot better illustrate this primitive idea of the king as at once the descendant and representative of the gods, than by referring to a somewhat famous passage in the second book of Homer's *Iliad*. The poet is describing a great assemblage of the chieftains of the Grecian army before the walls of Troy. Ulysses, bearing the sceptre of "mighty Agamemnon," the king, has gone about the camp, calling the heroes to the meeting, and to each one he has given warning of Agamemnon's anger against the host —

"Beware [he says] lest his wrath  
Fall heavily upon the sons of Greece.  
The monarch, foster-child of Jupiter,  
Is terrible enraged. Authority  
Is given by Jove all-wise, who loves the king."

In obedience to this summons, the warriors come to-

gether in the assembly hall to listen to the judgment of their "monarch." And when that judgment is spoken by the angry king, there is only one of all the Greeks who dares to stand upon his feet and challenge the authority which Agamemnon claims to exercise as "the foster-child of Jupiter." This man is "Thersites, of the clamorous tongue"; and the poet, to discredit this protest, and to make Thersites despicable in his reader's eyes, says of him:

"Of the multitude

Who came to Ilium, none so base as he —

Squint-eyed, with one lame foot, and on his back

A hump, and shoulders curving towards the chest."

And when Ulysses, angered at Thersites's protests against the judgment of the king, raises his sceptre and strikes him, wounded and bleeding, to the ground, the poet describes the host of warriors as approving the act, and bursting into shouts of laughter at the cripple's discomfiture. And yet, in spite of the majesty of Ulysses and Agamemnon, and of the poet's ridicule, this same "squint-eyed" and humpbacked Thersites is one of the first voices, in the literature of the world, to dispute the doctrine of the divine right of kings!

This Homeric episode presents a true picture of antiquity. In the eyes of Homer, as of all the ancients, such a king as Agamemnon was "the foster-child" of the gods, and held his authority as the gift of heaven. To revolt against the king was to revolt also against

the deities of Olympus, and was therefore the most terrible offence of which any man could be guilty. It was this idea of divine origin which made the king supreme and the people everywhere subject to his authority. It was this idea which inspired such an utterance as that of Caligula, when he wished that the Roman people had but a single neck, that he might wring it. It was this conception which led Louis XIV of France, when asked what constituted the State, to reply in scorn, "L'état — c'est moi!" It was this belief which led the obstinate and pig-headed James Stuart of England to declare that, as it is blasphemy to dispute the will of God, so is it criminal to dispute the will of the king. And it was this same idea which induced Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany to proclaim, only a few years ago, his famous maxim—"Salus populi, regis voluntas." Stephen Phillips, in his drama of *Nero*, portrays this conception of the divine right of kings with great effect, when he makes the youthful Emperor declare that the gods have sent him to the earth, "that he may be a joy to men"; and, when his words are silenced by a clap of thunder, makes him rebuke the heavens that they should interrupt his speech.

Now, it is this theory of divine right which has been the foundation of all authority in the field of government, from the day of Agamemnon to that of Wilhelm of Germany and Nicholas of Russia; and the battle for political freedom has simply been one long fight against this superstition. It is interesting to note that this fight begins comparatively early. Thus, Homer



recognises an existing protest, even though he ridicules and condemns it, in his character of Thersites. We find organised and scornful resistance to royal sovereignty in such a revolt as that of Harmodius and Aristogeiton against the tyrants of Athens, and the later close-bound democracy set up in that city. A similar rebellion against divine right is seen in the expulsion of the Tarquins from Rome in the fifth century before Christ, and the establishment of the Republic. With the conquest of the civilised world, however, by the Roman Empire, and the succeeding period of the Dark Ages, we find the doctrine of divine right fully re-established; and it was not until the thirteenth century, when the barons of England wrested the Magna Charta from the unwilling hands of King John, that we find another attempt to set over against the authority of a king the sovereign rights of a free people. That great victory at Runnymede, however, was the beginning of the end of the theory of the divine right of kingship; and, although many an ambitious monarch, like James and Charles Stuart and George III, endeavoured to reassert his claim to divine authority, and many a gallant champion of the people's rights, like Hampden and Cromwell and the elder Pitt, has had to fight many a battle against these arrogant pretenders, the issue was never again in any doubt, and the crowning triumphs of the nineteenth century were rapidly being completed in our own day, in the abolition of the English House of Lords, the establishment of parliaments in Russia and Turkey, the overthrow of Manuel

in Portugal, when the Great War put an end to the movement.

It is such events as these which made possible the famous incident which is told of Mr. Gladstone and Queen Victoria. The great Premier, it is said, was insisting with some heat that the Queen should sign a bill just passed by the House of Commons. Victoria refused his request, and, resenting his importunity, exclaimed, "Mr. Gladstone, you forget who I am. I am the Queen of England." To which Mr. Gladstone made, with splendid emphasis, the immortal reply, "Your Majesty, you forget who I am. I am the people of England." We have only to compare this statement with the reported saying of Louis XIV to comprehend what a transformation has taken place, even within as short a space of time as two hundred years, and to foresee how inevitable, in political society, is the triumph of liberty over every kind of royal and autocratic authority.

What is it, we would next inquire, which has overthrown this venerable doctrine of the divine right of a king to rule his people, which is sanctified by unnumbered ages of custom and tradition? In answer to this question, we may say that, on the whole, two forces have been operative.

In the first place, there is the negative fact that the people, as they developed in intelligence and culture, came gradually to see that the king, whom they had been taught to reverence as the offspring and representative of the gods, was, after all, an ordinary man, who had arisen to his seat of power only by some acci-

dent of birth or fortune. When, for example, there acceded to the throne of the Roman Empire such a lunatic as Caligula, such a monster as Nero, or such a childish imbecile as Elagabalus — when a king trampled upon the private rights of his people as did Tarquin Superbus, the last of the Roman kings, or the foolish Louis, who closed the awful reign of the Bourbon house in France — when a monarch was overthrown in battle and his throne captured by a mere adventurer like Jehu of Israel, or Vitellius of Rome — when a king was too young to rule, and some regent, like Catherine de' Medici of France, or Richard III, of England, exercised his authority in his stead — it was inevitable that the people should begin to question the theory of divine right. This degraded idiot, this wicked monster, this arrogant tyrant, this rebellious soldier, this arbitrary regent — is this the offspring and representative of God? Is it possible that God has given his divine sanction to such men as these — men who would be put to death as a menace to the public welfare, were it not for the fact that they were protected by the royal purple? The kings, that is, by their incapacity, cruelty, instability, were themselves their betrayers. Their own words and deeds revealed them as nothing but ordinary men, who were raised above their fellows not by the ordaining hand of God but by those accidents of birth and fortune which are human and not divine. Therefore is it only natural to find such rebellions as those in Athens and Rome, which led in very early days to the establishment of republics.

The second force which led to the overthrow of the theory of the divine right of kings was the positive fact, that men came to recognise what may be called the divine right of the common man to rule himself. Every once in a while there would appear some man of humble origin and station who seemed to be more truly a representative of God than the anointed sovereign of the realm. What, for example, was the divine right of Charles VII of France, as compared with the divine right of Joan of Arc, the peasant girl from the village of Domremy? And what claims to divine favour had Charles Stuart, the King of England, as opposed to those which were advanced by Oliver Cromwell, the farmer of Huntingdon? Then again, it happened every once in a while, that a throne would become vacant, or the people, in wrath against the tyranny of their sovereign, would declare the throne vacant and pursue its occupant across the borders of the land, as in the case of James II; and thereupon would be brought to pass the strange event of a people's choosing their own king, and placing the crown upon his head by their own popular decree.

By such occurrences as these, it was gradually impressed upon the human imagination that, if there was any such thing as divine right at all, it was the divine right of the people to rule themselves; and, as the first or negative fact, which we have mentioned, was the usual motive underlying the revolts of ancient times, so this second or positive fact was the usual motive underlying the revolts of modern times. It was the idea,

slowly dawning upon the human consciousness, that "all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these rights are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, that governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed"—it was this idea which led to the revolt of the thirteen American colonies against the tyranny of George III; it was this idea, as voiced by the eighteenth century Encyclopædists of France, which led to the uprising against the Bourbons and the resulting horrors of the Revolution; it was this idea which inspired the English Reform Bill of 1832; it was this idea which brought about the simultaneous uprisings of the people in France, Germany, Italy, and Austria in 1848; and it was this idea which was stirring lately in Russia, Portugal, and Spain, and planting in these nations the seeds of political and social liberty. Partial liberty was achieved in ancient times because unspeakable cruelty, disgraceful incapacity, and bold rebellions showed that the kings were anything but divine in origin and character—that, in a word, the whole theory of divine right was a baseless superstition. Complete liberty is being achieved in modern times because the theory of divine right, like every other theory of special privilege, is crumbling away before the modern conviction that equal opportunity and perfect liberty are the divine right of every man born into the world.

We have gone thus at some length into the history of the progress of political liberty, for the reason that it

is synonymous, in practically every detail, with the history of religious liberty. Spiritual authority, which still lays its hand so heavily upon the souls of men, has exactly the same origin — namely, the theory of divine right — as political authority; and, what is still more impressive, the authority of the church is gradually being destroyed to-day by the action of exactly the same forces as have already proved the undoing of the authority of the state. Men, that is, have been enslaved religiously as a result of exactly the same superstition which has enslaved them politically; and the same motives which led to the achievement of political liberty must at the same time lead to the achievement of religious liberty. In other words, any man to-day who accepts ideals of political liberty, must, if he would be consistent, accept parallel ideals of religious liberty, for they are identical throughout. In fighting the battle for political liberty, man has unconsciously been fighting the battle for religious liberty; and the victory which has already been won in the field of government is a certain prophecy of the victory which is destined to be achieved in the field of religion.

We have said that the origin of religious authority is the same as that of political authority. By this assertion we mean to imply that the church, like the king, has always ruled by virtue of what it calls its "divine right." All peoples, as they emerge from the darkness of antiquity, are found to be subject not alone to the king, but also to the priest; and each of these officials, the priest before his altar as well as the king

upon his throne, claims the right to rule as the divinely appointed representative of God. It makes no difference whether the religious authority be that of a priest or of a book, a prophet or a creed, the authority is in all cases founded upon this one universal idea of divine sanction. The Catholic priesthood of western Europe, the Greek priesthood of Russia, the Brahmanic priesthood of India, the Buddhist priesthoods of China and Japan, are all alike in tracing their right to exercise authority straight back to God, whose representatives they assume to be. The Koran, the five classics of Confucianism, the Vedic hymns of India, the Avesta of Persian Zoroastrianism, the Christian Bible — all claim infallible authority over the human mind by virtue of what is called their divine origin. Jesus is at one with Buddha, Mohammed, Zoroaster, Moses, Lao-tse, in being described by later ages as a divine being, appointed by God for the guidance of the people. The Christian church, in other words, is just like the Moslem church and the Hindu church and the Jewish church, in resting its foundations on the revealed word of God. In whatever other ways they may differ, these great world-religions are at least alike in this — that they claim to have been divinely inspired, and therefore to have the august right to exercise supreme authority over the minds, the hearts, and the consciences of men.

Now in religion exactly as in politics, just so long as this theory of divine right is recognised, just so long as the Catholic believes that the bishop's laying on

of hands has lifted the priest above all other men and endowed him to be the mouthpiece and instrument of God's will, and the Protestant believes that the Bible is different from all other books, since its words are the very words of God himself, just so long will any such thing as individual liberty in the realm of things spiritual be manifestly impossible. But in religion, exactly as in politics, this theory of divine right has to-day been utterly discredited in the minds of all intelligent people, by the same two facts, the one negative and the other positive, which have served to discredit the exalted theory of the divine right of kings.

In the first place, the church itself has been its own undoing. Claiming to be of divine origin, the church, like every other institution of our day, has been placed beneath the microscope of investigation, and secular history, archæology, the higher criticism of the sacred literatures, and the comparative study of religions have united to prove that there is no religion on the face of the earth which has been immediately revealed to the human heart, no church which is of divine origin, and no ecclesiastical authority of any kind, therefore, which has the right to control the thoughts and the lives of men. Religion, be it natural or prophetic, ancient or modern, pagan or Christian, is seen to be everywhere of human origin, and entitled to demand the obedience of men only as it claims and holds attention through the truth of the doctrines which it teaches and the spiritual beauty of the ideals which it sustains. It has been established, for example, within the narrow bounds of



a single century, that the Bible, like the Koran or the Avesta, is not uniquely divine, that it was written by men as any other book has been written, that it is a selected part of the literature of the ancient Hebrews and the early Christians, as the dramas of Sophocles and the orations of Demosthenes, the history of Livy and the epistles of Cicero, are a selected part of the literatures of Greece and Rome, and that it is to be venerated, therefore, like any other literature, just to the extent in which we find it uplifting and inspiring at the present day. Again, it has been discovered in recent times, that the Christian church, like any other social institution, was organised and developed, in its early years, not by the omnipotent hand of God, but by the weak and faltering hands of men; and that, like any other human institution, it can command obedience and hold allegiance only to the extent that it can convince the human mind, by natural processes, of the validity of its principles and the worth of its ideals. Still again, we are learning more and more truly every day, that Jesus, like Buddha and Zoroaster, has nothing particularly divine in his origin, character and achievements, as the legends would have us believe, but that he was simply a man among men, one of the many influential figures of human history, and that therefore his authority, like that of all other teachers and prophets, is not obligatory as being exercised by divine right, but obligatory only in so far as it can commend itself to-day to the growing consciousness of the race. In short, the divine right of a church, its creed and its Bibles,

its priests and its prophets, is exactly like the divine right of a king; each is a myth, a discredited tradition, a superstitious inheritance from a superstitious age, and the one should have no more part in modern thought than the other.

The second or positive force which has overthrown the pretensions of the church to divine authority is again exactly parallel to that which has long since destroyed the similar pretensions of royalty — namely, the recognition of the essential equality of all men in the sight of God. Against the infamous ecclesiastical tyranny of the Roman church, Martin Luther affirmed that wonderful battle-cry of the German Reformation, “the priesthood of the common man.” By that great phrase, Luther meant that no church or priesthood had any authority more divine in its origin than the authority which reposes in the breast of every individual born into the world. Luther did not understand the full implications of his own doctrine; he did not see, for example, that “the priesthood of the common man” involved the right of every man not only to establish his own churches and choose his own officers, but to interpret his own Bible and make his own creed. The mustard seed, however, was planted, and it has been growing through the ages into a mighty tree. To-day we are beginning to see that there is nothing so divine as human nature, that there is nothing so sacred as the human soul, that God, if he is to be found anywhere, must be found in the heart and mind of present humanity. Everywhere we are beginning to see that there is

nothing which the world can add to what has already been given by God to the humblest individual, and that before the divine authority of the living soul the church must crumble into dust, the priesthood fall, and the creeds and Bibles vanish like a flaming scroll. Now, as never before, we are beginning to see the truth in the noble saying of Emerson, America's greatest prophet of the soul, that "nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of our own mind, that no law can be sacred to a man but that of his own nature," that "the one fact that the world hates is the soul, since the soul forever degrades the past, turns all riches to poverty, all reputation to shame, confounds the saint with the rogue, and shoves Jesus and Judas equally aside."

It is by this same identical process of evolution that the divine right of the church, like the divine right of the king, has been destroyed; and authority, therefore, in the field of religion, become as impossible as in the field of politics. In religion, as in government, there is nothing of divine origin but the individual man; in religion, as in government, there is nothing which is sacred, and nothing, therefore, which can exercise authority, save the human soul; in religion, as in government, in the case of the priest and the creed, as in the case of the king and the royal edict, the institutions of authority must go, and in their place must come the dignity of the common man, who, in his capacity as a child of the ever-living God, is at once

his own king and his own high-priest. In other words, authority must yield to liberty!

That this fact is clearly apprehended and has already been largely acted upon in the world of politics, is evident. That it is very far from being apprehended and acted upon in the world of religion is equally evident. Still do men fail to recognise that the authority of the church, like the authority of the king, is based upon the identical superstition of divine right; still do they fail to understand that the doctrine of the kingship of the common man, which nobody disputes, at least here in America, is synonymous with that of the priesthood of the common man; and still do they fail to see that the great conceptions of individual liberty inscribed in the Declaration of Independence are just as true of men in their relations as members of a church as in their relations as citizens of a nation. While the political fetters have been cast aside, the religious fetters, which were fashioned at the same forge and moulded by the same workmen, are still worn without protest or indignation. Men who would die before they would yield submission to a king, gladly yield submission to a pope; and men who would pour out their last drop of blood before they would obey a royal edict, swallow a church creed without turning a hair. And yet, slow as is the progress of consistent thinking, and few as are the people whose minds can move from a premise to a conclusion, it must be obvious that, in religion as in politics, authority must go and liberty be finally

achieved — that all men must eventually come, in the church as in the state, “to speak and to do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.” And this means — what?

It means essentially two things. In the first place, it means that every man will insist upon his own enjoyment of absolute liberty of thought and speech. It means that no man will accept the authority of any written creed, even though it be backed by the authority of all the twelve apostles, and be offered as the sole condition of salvation in the world to come. It means that no man will yield obedience to a pope or a bishop or a church council of any kind, but will decide for himself as to what he shall believe, how he shall worship, and what he shall do in the service of God and of his kingdom. It means that no man will surrender his reason to the traditional authority of the Bible, but will insist upon his freedom to glean from the scriptures what he finds to be true and inspiring, and throw away all the rest. It means that no man will yield his reason and conscience to the authority of Jesus. He will accept the teachings of the Nazarene in so far as he finds them true to-day, he will accept his moral principles and spiritual ideals in so far as they satisfy the needs of the present hour, he will follow in his footsteps in so far as his leadership still seems wise and helpful; but of all these things he will hold himself, and not the church or the creed, to be the final judge. In short, religious liberty means that a man will yield to no authority save that of his

own reason, and bow before no divine sanctions save those of his own soul. It means that popes will be dethroned and bishops disrobed, that creeds will be forgotten and rituals discarded. It means that the worshipper in a church, like the citizen in a democracy, will be free to stand upon his own feet, to speak his own message, and to follow his own conscience — free, as Emerson puts it, to “obey no law other than the eternal law.”

But this “law of liberty” means more than this. It means, in the second place, that a man will not only insist upon the enjoyment of perfect liberty for himself, but that he will also grant the enjoyment of perfect liberty to his neighbour. It means that he will give to his fellow-men exactly that degree of freedom which he reserves to himself. It means that he will allow his fellows to enslave themselves religiously, if they so desire — to be free, that is, to forfeit their freedom by voluntarily submitting to the tyranny of a Roman priesthood or the equal tyranny of a Protestant creed. It means that he will allow his neighbours to outlaw themselves from all religion, if they so desire — to be free, that is, to accept the gospel of atheism or materialism without forfeiting any of their rights and privileges in this world or in the next. It means that, under the reign of this “law of liberty,” persecution will cease — not merely the persecution of the faggot, the sword and the cross, but the equally cruel persecution of ridicule, denunciation, and social ostracism. It means, in a word, that every man, enjoying liberty

himself, will respect the equal right of other men to similar liberty. In the words of Robert Browning, in his sonnet, "Why I am a Liberal":

"Who is it dares hold, himself emancipate,  
His fellow shall continue bound? Not I,  
Who live, love, labour freely, nor discuss  
A brother's right to freedom."

In such an ideal as this do we find the new religion of liberty, as contrasted with the old religion of authority. And in this ideal do we find as well that true religion, for which the world has so long been waiting. Religion has again and again been defined as the yearning of the human soul for some kind of union in service and love with that infinite and eternal spirit which constitutes the essence of all life. And what has done so much to prevent this union of the soul of man with the spirit of God, as the fetters of ecclesiasticism and dogma, with which the church has chained the aspirations of the race? Is it not a significant fact that the whole history of religious progress is the history of one long succession of revolts against the authority of some established church by the prophet-heroes of the race? The religious story of Israel is the story of the persistent battle between the Jewish hierarchy upon the one hand, and, upon the other, that long succession of inspired prophets, which began with Elijah and Elisha, Amos and Hosea, and culminated in the sublime figure of Jesus of Nazareth himself. The story of the Protestant Reformation is the story of the revolt of

Luther and his comrades in many lands against the spiritual tyranny of Rome, which for ten long centuries had buried all of Europe in the dark dungeons of mediæval ignorance and superstition. The story of Puritanism, which constitutes the noblest page in the history of modern England, is the story of the fight of those who called themselves "ye Lord's free people," not merely against Charles Stuart and his unwarranted exercise of political authority, but also against Archbishop Laud and his unwarranted exercise of ecclesiastical authority, and thus of a struggle not merely for freedom to rule, but also for "freedom to worship God." A man can no more unite his soul with God, when denied religious liberty, than a bird confined in a cage can wing its flight to the blazing sun. Every step towards greater liberty is always therefore a step towards God. The one declaration of St. Paul regarding Jesus, as we cannot too often remember, was that he had made men free. The supreme declaration of the new religion of our time is that it will enable men to throw aside fetters forged by centuries of dogma, and regain the freedom originally granted them by Christ. The great call of this new religion is that which was spoken by St. Paul, and reaffirmed by St. James, "Stand forth in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again in the yoke of bondage," that "ye may so speak and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty."



## JUSTICE, NOT CHARITY

IN the early days of the history of Christianity, nothing so amazed the citizens of the Roman Empire as the boundless charity which was practised by its adherents. It was this, perhaps, as much as anything else, which set off the early Christians from their pagan neighbours in the cities of Greece and Asia Minor, where the early churches were established; for charity, as we know it to-day, after centuries of Christian experience, was practically unknown in ancient times. The Roman state, to be sure, was lavish in its gifts of grain to the common people, and distinguished men, such as Julius Cæsar and Augustus, were accustomed to give donations to the multitudes on occasions of great public rejoicing; but the gifts of the state were inspired more by policy than by benevolence, and the Cæsars, when they scattered money to the shouting rabble, were moved by pride rather than by pity. A few examples of genuine pagan charity have come down to us in the records of the past. Thus Nepos tells us that Epaminondas, one of the noblest of all the Greeks, was accustomed to ransom captives with his own money, and collect dowries for poor girls. Plutarch narrates that Cimon, the Athenian, was noted for his kindness in feeding the hungry and clothing the naked. Tacitus has described with enthusiasm how, after a dreadful

catastrophe near Rome, the rich threw open the doors of their houses and taxed all their resources to relieve the sufferers. But "there can be no doubt," says the great English historian, Mr. Lecky, in his *History of European Morals*, "that neither in practice nor in theory, neither in the institutions that were founded nor in the place that was assigned to it in the scale of duties, did charity in antiquity occupy a position at all comparable to that which it has obtained by Christianity. . . . Christianity," he continues, "for the first time, made charity a rudimentary virtue, giving it a leading place in the moral type, and in the exhortations of its teachers."

This distinctive feature of Christian life is conspicuous even in the earliest days of the new movement. In every church, a committee was appointed to care for the widows and the orphans and the unfortunate of every kind. Even in the days of bitter persecution, regular collections for the relief of the poor were received at the Sunday meetings. Before many years had passed, a "vast organisation of charity, presided over by the bishops, and actively directed by the deacons, ramified over all of Christendom, till the bond of charity became the bond of unity." Furthermore, acts of notable private benevolence became not uncommon, and institutions of mercy, which were totally unknown to the pagan world, were established in large numbers. Thus a Roman lady, named Fabiola, founded at Rome, in the fourth century, as an act of penance, the first public hospital; and "the charity

by that woman's hand," says Mr. Lecky, "overspread the world and will alleviate, to the end of time, the darkest anguish of humanity." Other hospitals were soon founded by St. Pammachus and St. Basil; and St. Basil also erected at Cæsarea what was probably the first asylum for lepers. A monk named Thalasius established an asylum for blind beggars on the banks of the Euphrates. In the time of St. Chrysostom, the church at Antioch, we are told, supported no less than three thousand widows and virgins, to say nothing of the strangers and the sick. Legacies for the poor became very common; and it was not at all unusual for men and women, who desired to live a life of peculiar sanctity, to bestow their entire properties upon churches or monasteries for charitable uses. Indeed, one of the chief causes of the extraordinary power acquired by the clergy, and the insidious corruption which soon began to overcome them, was the gigantic wealth which was placed in their hands as the trustees of the poor by the sympathetic or the repentant or the dying.

What was true in the early days of Christianity has been true ever since, and is true to-day. The essence of applied Christianity has been charity. No man has ever been regarded as a true Christian who has not given to the poor, and no church has ever been regarded as faithful to its Christian task which has not offered succour to the needy and distressed. Indeed, so great has been the emphasis upon charity, and so high has this activity been ranked in the scale of

Christian virtues, that the world has been all too ready to pardon every other shortcoming for its sake. Many a king has visited cruelty and oppression upon his people, and yet has been applauded by his subjects because he has given freely from his private purse to the beggars upon the public streets. Many a priest has been a worker of iniquity, and yet has been forgiven because he has visited the sick and given relief to the distresses of the poor. And many a millionaire, right here in our country to-day, who has acquired his enormous fortune by methods which it would be mild to describe as robbery, is everywhere acclaimed as a good citizen and a faithful Christian, because he builds libraries, endows colleges, and establishes scientific, educational, and philanthropic foundations. Charity, in other words, weighs so heavily in the scale of Christian virtues, that it seems to counterbalance everything else. Well has it been said, that "charity covers a multitude of sins"!

It is not without reason, however, that charity has been thus exalted; for whatever we may think about the quality of this virtue to-day, there can be no question as to the service which it has rendered in the past to human happiness. Mr. Lecky is right when he says that "no achievements of the Christian church are more truly great than those which it has effected in the sphere of charity." Even though the church had done nothing else, it has here at least conferred a priceless boon upon the human race. Nothing is more terrible in ancient days than the indifference of mankind to the

needs of the poor and the sufferings of the weak. Mercy seems to have been a quality which was then unknown to the human breast. The exposure of unwelcome infants, the neglect of enfeebled old age, the torture of captives and slaves, the hatred of the labourer, the contempt for woman — all of these things were the commonplaces of ancient civilisations; and not until Christianity came into the pagan world, with its sense of the sanctity of human life and its great conception of human brotherhood, did the strong feel any moral obligation for the protection of the weak, or the rich for the redemption of the poor.

With the advent of Christianity, however, pity seems to have been born into the western world. For the first time it was realised “that it is more blessed to give than to receive”; for the first time it was understood that we must do unto others as we would that others should do unto us; for the first time it was seen that we must love our neighbour — that, if he hungers, we must give him food, if he thirsts, we must give him drink, if he is naked, we must clothe him, if he is sick or in prison, we must visit him. For the first time, “the other man” was seen, and our moral obligation to him was understood. It is no accident that Christianity has inspired thousands of men and women, at the sacrifice of worldly interest and personal comfort, to devote their entire lives to the single object of assuaging the sufferings of humanity. It is no accident that it is the Christian civilisation which has covered the globe with hospitals for the sick, schools for

the ignorant, asylums for the insane, homes for the orphan, the widow, and the aged, and charity organisations for the relief of poverty and distress. It is no accident that in every parish, throughout the Christian world, however small or inconspicuous, there is a man set apart from the ordinary walks of life as a minister of religion, who is charged, among other functions, with the care of those who are in distress of "mind, body, or estate." All these things are only so many expressions of that charity which has softened human nature, opened the heart to pity and compassion, and "united forever, in the minds of men, the idea of supreme goodness with that of active and constant benevolence."<sup>1</sup> Ask what distinctive contribution Christianity has made to human history, and nine men out of ten would cite the parable of the Good Samaritan, who, unlike the Pharisee and the Levite, showed mercy on the man "who fell among thieves." This is charity; and it is this charity which has been the supreme ideal of the Christian life ever since the day when that parable was spoken, and is the supreme blessing which the Christian church has conferred upon the world. "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father" is partly, no doubt, "to keep oneself unspotted from the world"; but first and foremost, as the Apostle well pointed out, it is to "visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction."

Now it may seem strange, in view of all the good that has been done in the world by the service of the Chris-

<sup>1</sup> See Lecky's *History of European Morals*, vol. II,

tian church, that anybody should deny the supremacy of charity among the virtues of the soul, or assert that there is a better and higher duty to humanity that we as good Christians can perform. And yet nothing is truer than the fact that there have always been a few great spirits who have seemed to be dissatisfied with charity as the fulfilment of religion, and to be reaching forth to some higher and nobler ideal of human service. Always have there been certain brave and devoted men who have gone out among the hungry and the naked, the downtrodden and the oppressed, and asked if charity was all that could be offered to these people, if charity was really the fulfilment of "pure religion and undefiled," if charity was the ultimate way of expressing the spirit of brotherhood and love. Indeed, there have been some men who have even gone so far as to suggest that charity meant the defeat and not the victory, the nullification and not the fulfilment, of religion; and that the more generous was the charitable service of the church, the more sure we could be that the religion of the church was a mockery and a sham. Paul had something of this feeling—that charity, however cheerful and abundant, is not everything—when he wrote that wonderful sentence in his first letter to the Corinthians: "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing." This sentence I could never understand as a boy, since I naturally thought that "bestowing all one's goods to feed the poor" was the whole of love. But now I believe that the Apostle saw that charity,

which meant simply giving to relieve the necessities of the poor, was not the highest ideal of the Christian life; but that beyond this there was that unmixed spirit of love which, if acted upon, would see to it that there were no poor who needed to be fed. St. Augustine, that "ancient friend of the poor," surely had some such idea as this — that charity was only a temporary makeshift, and not at all the ultimate fulfilment of the ideal of human service — when he said, "Thou givest bread to the hungry; but better were it that he never hungered and thou hadst none to give him." This remark clearly indicates that the great churchman believed that it was good to give bread to the hungry, but infinitely better if the poor man had his own bread, and you had only enough bread for yourself, and therefore none to spare for him — a condition of things slightly different from that which actually exists to-day in modern society, or, for that matter, has ever existed in the society of any age! There can be no question as to what was meant by those church fathers of the second and third centuries of our era who proclaimed that charity was not a matter of mercy but of justice, maintaining that all property is based on usurpation, that the earth by right is common to all men, and that no man can justly claim a superabundant supply of this world's goods — a statement so similar to the famous remark of the French socialist, Proudhon, that "all property is theft," that one can scarcely believe that it comes from these early Christian sources. There are evidently some Christians, in good and regu-



lar standing, who have been dissatisfied with charity; some Christians who have seen some ideal of religion beyond that of mere giving by those who have to those who have not; some Christians who have dared to think that it would be infinitely better if there were a somewhat more even distribution of material wealth, such that there would be no poor to be relieved, and also no rich to give relief. Charity is very plainly not the final end and aim of true religion, if these teachers are to be trusted.

We may, perhaps, be able to understand the feeling of these men, in their dissatisfaction with charity as the ideal of religious service, if we consider for a moment what are the conditions which make the practice of Christian charity both necessary and possible. These conditions, if I mistake not, are two.

First of all, in order that there shall be any such thing as charity successfully practised, there must be a class of people in society who have more money in their possession than they really need!

Of course, the noblest kind of charity is that which is given by those persons who have only a little, but give with cheerfulness the little that they have. Jesus never taught a more impressive lesson than when he compared the rich people, who cast their generous offerings into the temple treasury, with the poor widow, who threw in two mites, and pointed out that this poor widow cast in more than the others, since "they cast in of their abundance, but she of her want did cast in

all that she had." This was charity of a perfect type; and it is a charity which is by no means uncommon among the poor in our tenements and slums, whose generosity to one another in the hour of distress puts to shame the generosity of those who live in comfort and luxury. But charity on any extensive and effective scale is absolutely conditional upon the ownership of great wealth by a selected portion of the community. The charity, which builds its hospitals and asylums, which endows its churches and its schools, which organises and maintains its great public philanthropies, is made possible only because certain persons have enormous sums of money at their disposal, which must be used for purposes of public benefit, or else lie idle in their money-chests. This age has been called pre-eminently the age of charity. At the close of every year, we are invited to rejoice at the hundreds of millions of dollars which have been given by our Carnegies and Rockefellers for the uplift of humanity. Unquestionably we must acknowledge a certain degree of satisfaction that these immensely rich men feel their public responsibilities and thus give generously to the common weal; and yet must we recognise that this age surpasses all previous ages in the magnitude of its charitable enterprises, only because this age also surpasses all others in the number and magnitude of its private fortunes. It is true to-day, with our colleges and foundations, as it was true yesterday, with its cathedrals and monastic orders, that charity flourishes

most abundantly when wealth is accumulated most abundantly in the hands of a few individuals or families.

This is the first of the two essential conditions of charity. The second may best be given in the words of Mr. Lecky, as written in his *History of European Morals*. "Charity," he says, "finds an extended scope for action only where there exists a large class of men who are impoverished." Charity, in other words, is immediately dependent upon poverty, and the more charity there is, the more people there are who are in a condition of misery and distress. If food is distributed abroad by generous hands, it must mean that there are thousands of people who are face to face with starvation; if hospitals are built in our cities and towns, it must mean that people are sickening and dying all about us; if millions of dollars are given every year in charitable relief, it must mean that multitudes of our fellow-men have not even the few pennies that are necessary to keep body and soul together. / It is beautiful to see some sympathetic woman reaching down an alms to the beggar by the highway, but what about the beggar whose hand is uplifted to receive the coin? It is inspiring to see some wealthy man scattering his millions, like some noble lord scattering gold pieces to the rabble at his palace gate, but what about the overworked and underpaid toilers in our modern industrial life, who are the recipients of his charity? It is wonderful to see the Good Samaritan, but what about the man who fell among the thieves, was

stripped of his raiment, and left by the roadside half-dead? The one part of the picture is beautiful, only because the other part is so hideous. After all, the fact is evident that charity is abundant only because misery is equally abundant; that millionaires build libraries only because the people cannot build them for themselves; that philanthropists support hospitals, only because the people cannot afford to pay for their own physicians and nurses; that our stupendous charity organisation societies give public relief, only because thousands of men and women cannot earn enough money in a ten- or twelve-hour day to live even in tenements and slums. This age is indeed pre-eminent for its charities, but only because it is equally pre-eminent for its misery and degradation.

Here, now, are the two absolutely essential conditions of extensive charity — first, the existence of a small class of men who are immensely wealthy; and second, the existence of a large class of men who are impoverished. Without these two conditions of wealth and poverty, existing side by side, charity would be neither possible nor necessary. And it is just this fact that has persuaded some of the greatest spirits of the ages past to believe that there is something more vital and more important in religion than any charity which can be offered to the unfortunate and the suffering. It is all right to give food to the hungry, but why should some people be hungry, and other people have more than they can eat? It is all right to give clothing to the naked, but why should some people be naked, and

others be clothed in purple and fine linen? It is all right to give relief to the poor, but why should some people be miserably poor, and others be so rich that their gold and silver have become a burden? Is this unequal distribution of this world's goods fair, and, above all, is it permanent? Is it not true that wealth and poverty, existing side by side, is an indictment of religion; and the charity, which is made possible and necessary by these conditions, an evidence of the failure of religion? For what, after all, we may well ask, is religion?

Religion, on its practical or social side, was defined by the greatest preacher that this world has ever seen, as the unification of humanity — the brotherhood of man. Jesus's conception of humanity was that of one great family, bound together by the ties of love. God, said Jesus, is a Father, and men are brothers one of another; and, in accordance with this conception, he dreamed of the coming of a time when men should come from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south, and all sit down together in the Kingdom of God. Jesus looked upon all men as simply the sons of God. He refused to recognise any distinctions of class or colour, race or nationality. He disdained to know either Jew or Gentile, bond or free. He declined to acknowledge any difference between rich and poor, high and low. He ignored even the ties of family kinship — for when he was besought by his mother and his brethren to leave the multitudes and return to the seclusion of his home, he opened his arms to the men

and women and little children who were gathered about him, and declared that these were his mother and his brethren? Jesus asserted that no man could be called religious, however many prayers he spoke, however many sacrifices he laid upon the temple altar, who cherished hate and practised greed against his fellow-men. Religion, to Jesus, meant gentleness and good-will — it meant service and sympathy and love. God as the Father, humanity as the one great family of God, all men as brothers one of another, love as the perfect law of life, this was Jesus's conception of applied religion!

Now we only have to understand this conception of religion as consisting of the realisation of human brotherhood, in order to understand why it is that charity, so far from being a fulfilment of religion, is actually the sign and symbol of its failure. Charity, as we have seen, can flourish only when society is divided between poverty upon the one hand and wealth upon the other. Now, if there is any one thing which is absolutely inconsistent with religion as Jesus understood it, and any one thing which makes impossible the realisation of its ideal of human brotherhood, it is this very fact of the separation of mankind into the rich and the poor. It is not for nothing that, when the rich young man desired to enter into the fellowship of the disciples, Jesus insisted that he should sell all his goods, and come to him with empty hands. It is not for nothing that the early Christians declined to hold any private property, but, upon their entrance into the community, put all they had into the common

treasury. They knew, as Jesus knew, that, in the Kingdom of God, there could be no rich and no poor. They understood perfectly, as Jesus understood, that the brotherhood of the Kingdom meant each for all and all for each — that all must work and rest and play and live and die together, and share and share alike.

The practice of charity began in the early Christian communities, only because the ideal of brotherhood broke down, and poor and rich began almost immediately to appear; and charity increased in volume and extent, only because this ideal became more and more remote as time went on. "Charity," said Henry D. Lloyd, in one of the most notable utterances that ever came from his inspired lips, "charity is the bankruptcy of brotherhood," and therefore the bankruptcy of religion! It means that religion has failed, that it has gone out of business, that it has passed into the hands of a receiver! Charity, from the standpoint of the true religion of humanity, is, at the best, only a makeshift, an apology, an expedient. It is an attempt to make an essentially wrong condition of things tolerable, until men can pull themselves together and make it right. It is a confession that we have failed to make good our religion, and are trying to cover up the failure.

If religion is ever to succeed, ever to fulfil its real ideal, ever to build that Kingdom of God of which Jesus loved to dream, it must do something more than practise charity; something more than recognise the

existence of the rich and poor, and persuade the one to give of their abundance to the miseries of the other; something more than build hospitals and asylums, establish charity societies and philanthropic foundations, give turkey dinners at Thanksgiving to the hungry, and distribute presents at Christmas to the needy. It must go behind the wealth and poverty which make brotherhood impossible, and abolish them utterly. It must seek the union of all men in the circle of a common family, where differences of possession shall be unknown, and charity therefore unnecessary. It must seek, in a word, not the enlargement but the elimination of charity. This is what Paul meant when he said that it signifies nothing to give our goods to feed the poor, unless we have that spirit of love which shall make poverty impossible. This is what St. Augustine meant when he said that it was good to give bread to the hungry, but it were better if there were no hungry, and we had no bread to give. This is what the old church fathers meant when they said that the real charity was a matter not of mercy but of justice. And this is why the new religion of our time turns away from charity as its ideal and appeals to justice.

For what is justice? Over the court-house of nearly every city and town of this country, there stands a familiar statue, which is supposed to be a symbolic representation of the ideal of justice. The figure is always that of a woman, whose eyes are blindfolded, who holds in her right hand a sword, and in her left



hand a pair of scales. The blinded eyes signify that justice is no respecter of persons, that she does not even know who comes before her, whether rich or poor, high or low, king or peasant, and that she will give to all, therefore, a judgment which is unswerved by prejudice. The pair of scales suggests that the balances are held even for every one, and that judgment will thus be determined by a law of right as infallible as the law of gravitation. And the sword, of course, suggests that a judgment will be decreed which is untempered by mercy.

Now this figure gives a not inadequate representation of the idea of justice. It suggests, does it not, that justice is the logic of the soul—that spiritual process which provides, like the analogous intellectual process, that a certain moral conclusion shall invariably follow a certain moral premise. Or, to put it as Theodore Parker put it in his great sermon on *Justice and the Conscience*, “justice is the natural law of the soul”—that spiritual process which provides, like the analogous material process, that a certain moral effect shall invariably follow from a certain moral cause. Justice has reference to merit and desert. It means that a man shall reap only what he has sown, receive only what he has earned, suffer only what he has incurred. “Justice,” says my dictionary, “is the rendering of what is due or merited.” “Justice,” says Aristotle, in his *Ethics*, “is that virtue of the soul which is distributive according to desert.” “Justice,” says Montesquieu, “is a relation of con-

gruity which really subsists between two things, and which is always the same, whether considered by God, or an angel, or a man." "Injustice," says the Mohammedan Koran, defining the opposite of true justice, "is the grasping of that which belongs to another." Justice, in other words, is a relation of exact correspondence between moral initiative and moral consequence. It means equal opportunity, the distribution of reward and penalty according to desert, the bearing of our own burdens and only our own. It means, to use ex-President Roosevelt's expressive phrase, "the square deal"—or, to use the still more expressive vernacular of modern slang, that each man "gets what is coming to him," no less and also no more! The poised scales in the uplifted hand of the goddess tell the whole meaning of that justice which she is supposed to represent.

Now, it is in order to secure this justice to every individual, to provide that every man shall receive all to which he is morally entitled and shall grasp nothing that belongs morally to another, that governments are established among men. "Justice," said James Madison, in one of his papers in the *Federalist*, "is the end of government—it is the only end of civil society." But this end of government, unfortunately, has never yet been realised upon the earth. Always have there been those who have enjoyed exemption from the stern exactions of justice, and for one reason or another have been granted what we know as special privilege. The most glorious civilisation, in many respects, that

the world has ever seen — that of ancient Athens — was enjoyed by a few hundred Athenian citizens, at the expense of thousands and tens of thousands of abject and persecuted slaves. In the ancient Republic of Rome, to say nothing of the later Empire, the privileged person was the native Latin, who crushed beneath his iron heel of conquest all the nations of the earth. In the Europe of the Middle Ages, there was the privilege of birth — a noble class, from the king upon the one hand to the petty lord upon the other, enjoying privileges which were denied the great masses of the common people. In England, for many centuries, the favoured sons of fortunes were the landowners of the kingdom; and it is only within recent years that anybody has dared to question the right of this comparatively small group of wealthy men to hold the privileges which have for so long been theirs. In America, a country embarrassed by the survival of no ancient rights, our special privileges have taken new and unfamiliar forms. But they are here, as they are everywhere, in the form of protective tariffs, perpetual franchises, private land grants, and industrial monopolies. “The end of government,” as James Madison put it, may be “justice”; but everywhere do we see this end of government defeated by the encroachments of special privilege. Always is there some kind of title, or rank, or political power, or system of taxation, or right of private ownership, which is granted to some few individuals or families, and denied to all the rest. Originally, these privileges may have had some moral

basis in the form of service rendered to the common good; but all such service has long since disappeared, and to-day these privileges rest upon no securer foundation than inheritance or tradition. In one aspect or another, the picture drawn by Thomas Carlyle of special privilege in France, just before the outbreak of the Revolution, is typical of all ages and all countries. "The widow," he says, "gathers nettles for her children's dinner, and a perfumed seigneur, lounging in his palace, hath an alchemy whereby he will extract from her every third nettle, and call it rent."

Now this reference of Carlyle's to the poor "widow" and the "perfumed seigneur" shows clearly what we have just begun to learn within comparatively recent times, that it is these special privileges enjoyed by the few — these privileges which constitute, as we have seen, a nullification of that even-handed justice which "is the end of government" — which are the ultimate cause of those conditions of wealth and poverty which make impossible the unification of humanity. We used to flatter ourselves that the acquisition of great wealth was to be attributed to the extraordinary diligence or ability of the exceptional individual — that if a man amassed his millions it was because he, as an individual, was a "Napoleon of finance"! But this comfortable idea is now very rapidly disappearing from the minds of men, especially in America. It is true, of course, that the diligent man or the able man will gather more money than the sluggard or the fool, and it is only right that he should, inasmuch as justice means, in the words

of Aristotle, "distribution according to desert." But this truth cannot find any possible application to those stupendous inequalities of possession which are one of the most familiar facts of history. If a man was wealthy in ancient Rome, it was because he was a man of Latin birth or Senatorial rank, and was thus privileged to own immense estates in Italy and plunder the provinces to his heart's content. If a man was wealthy in mediæval Europe, it was because he was a feudal lord, who was served and supported by his thousands of retainers. If a man is wealthy in England to-day, the chances are that he is the owner of thousands of acres of private lands which are untaxed by the government. If a man is wealthy in America, it is because he owns real estate, or has been granted a franchise, or collects rent, or owns a coal mine, or is one of the swine who has his snout in the tariff trough. Go behind any immense fortune, and you will find brains and energy, to be sure; but mostly you will find privilege, the absolutely legal, but at the same time the absolutely immoral, "grasping of that which belongs to another." Every third nettle that the widow picks for her starving children the "perfumed seigneur lounging in his palace" has the privilege of snatching from her hand in the form of rent! That, or something closely akin to that, is the explanation of great wealth!

And if wealth is thus to be explained, in the ultimate analysis, as the fruit of injustice, so also, of course, is poverty. Just as we used to think that wealth



was due to an exceptionally high grade of individual ability or morals, so also we used to think that poverty was due, in the same way, to an exceptionally low grade of individual ability or morals. If a man was poor, we used to say that it was because he was lazy, or impoverished, or intemperate, or inefficient, or immoral. But more and more in our day, for reasons which I have no time to state at this time, this feature of individual responsibility is beginning to disappear from the problem of poverty, and the feature of social responsibility to take its place. "I hold," says Dr. Edward T. Devine, the leading social expert of New York, "that personal shortcoming and depravity is as foreign to any sound theory of the hardships of our modern poor as witchcraft or demoniacal possession — that these hardships are economic and social," and not individual! If a man is poor to-day, it may be because he is lazy or inefficient or immoral. We may freely grant the possibility — all the more willingly, as the possibility is so slight; but the chances are ten to one that social injustice and not individual depravity is to blame. If a man is poor, it is because he cannot get to the land, or because he cannot get to the machine; or, if he does get to the land, a good part of his earnings are snatched from him in the form of rent, and, if he does get to the machine, an equally large part of his earnings are snatched from him in the form of profit. If a man is poor, it is because he cannot get employment — because society will not let him work; or, if he does find a job, because he cannot

earn a living wage. If a man is poor, it is because he is burdened by low wages on the one hand, and high prices upon the other; because he is physically weakened by long hours of toil and indecent living conditions, or physically crippled by industrial accident; because he is old, and has been cast on the junk-heap of modern industry; because, out of the little that he has, he is taxed to the limit for the support of vast armaments of war, protected industries, and corporation dividends. Poverty has little to do with the character or the ability of the individual who suffers. "Poverty," says Dr. Devine, "is in the main the story of social injustice . . . of adverse conditions over which the individual who suffers is unable to exercise effective control, but which are not beyond social control. . . . It lies not in the unalterable nature of things, but in our human institutions, our social arrangements, our tenements and slums and subways, our laws and courts and jails, our politics, our industry and our business." Every third nettle that the widow picks for her starving children, the "perfumed seigneur" has the privilege of snatching from her hand. That, or something closely akin to that, is the explanation not only of the wealth of the noble lord, but also of the poverty of the wretched widow!

It is this special privilege which is the ultimate cause both of poverty and wealth. If either of these evils is to be abolished, it must be through the abolition of special privilege, which means the establishment of that even-handed justice which is "the end of government."

And does not this make clear why the new religion proclaims that humanity is to be "redeemed with justice" and not charity? The fulfilment of religion, as we have seen, means essentially the establishment of the brotherhood of man. The realisation of this ideal of human brotherhood, as we have also seen, is simply impossible, so long as society is beset by conditions of wealth and poverty. Charity is the evidence of the existence of these conditions, and therefore, as Mr. Lloyd has said, signifies "the bankruptcy of brotherhood." Charity, just because it depends upon the continuance of these conditions of wealth and poverty which make brotherhood impossible, is the only evidence that we need that religion has failed to achieve its end. Any religion which is satisfied to have a few men rich and most men poor; which is content to have some men rolling in luxury while others are suffering for the barest necessities of life; which is not at all disturbed that some men should live in idleness and have everything, and other men toil ten hours a day for seven days in the week for fifty-two weeks in the year, and still have nothing; which is not indignant that some men should live in palaces and others in tenements, that some women should be toys and others starve, that some children should have every chance to live and others have every chance to die; which has no higher ideal, in the face of the facts of modern social life, than charity — this religion is no religion at all. It is only a mockery and a sham of religion!

What true religion wants and will have is brother-



hood! In order to get brotherhood, it must abolish the wealth and poverty which separate mankind! In order to abolish wealth and poverty, it must abolish the special privilege which produces both! And in order to abolish this special privilege, it must seek the establishment of that justice which is "the end of government"! Is not the lesson plain? Is it not evident that what we want is not charity, but justice; that justice which renders to every individual what is rightly his due, which distributes the fruits of the earth and the fruits of labour according to desert, which provides that there shall be some congruity between what a man gets and what a man gives, which forbids that any one shall grasp what belongs to another, which permits the widow to use for herself all the nettles that she gathers for her children? What we want is the justice which gives "the square deal" to every man; which means equal opportunity for all and special privilege for none; which gives to all what belongs to all, and to each what each has earned. What we want is the justice which is truly blind to persons, and holds the scales as even as the everlasting stars. Give this, and wealth and poverty alike will disappear, and charity become unnecessary. Give this, and men will be drawn together as brethren in one common family, "each for all and all for each." Give this, and religion will for the first time be fulfilled in the establishment of God's Kingdom upon the earth. "Thou shalt be redeemed with justice," said Isaiah —

and only to-day is the meaning of his word becoming clear!

Justice, therefore, is the watchword of the new religion — that justice which means the end alike of poverty and wealth, and therefore the beginning of human brotherhood. And what a change is accomplished by this transition from the ideal of charity to that of justice in our whole conception of the practical aspects of religion?

In the first place, the new ideal wholly transforms our attitude toward the poor. Whereas we have said to the poor man in the past, "What do you need?" — to-day we are going to say, "Why do you need?" So long as a man is hungry, we will give him food; so long as he is naked, we will clothe him; so long as he is in prison, we will visit him. Charity will continue as long as misery endures. But more important to us than the satisfaction of his wants, is the explanation of his wants. More important than the fact that the man is hungry, is the fact that he has been unable to get employment, or, if employed, has been unable to earn a living wage. More important than the fact that the man is sick, is the fact that he has been unable to buy adequate clothing because of the protective tariff on wool. More important than the fact that the man is in prison, is the fact that, as a boy, he was denied full time in school, playgrounds, and a decent home, and thus made a criminal in spite of himself. The question which practical religion asked yesterday

was simply "What does this man need?" This same question, of course, we shall continue to ask to-day. But it will be immediately followed by the infinitely more vital question, "Why does this man need?" And not until the second question, which concerns justice, is answered as decisively as the first question, which concerns charity; not until the crust of bread is followed by the living wage, the physician's drug by sunlight and fresh air, and the visit to the prison by the playground and the home—not until then will the new religion be content.

If this transition from the ideal of charity to that of justice involves a change in our attitude toward the poor, so also does it involve a change in our attitude toward the rich. For whereas we asked yesterday of the rich man, "Where can you give your money?" to-day we are asking him, "Where did you get your money?" We are no longer interested in how many libraries a man can build, or how many colleges he can endow, or how many scientific and educational and philanthropic foundations he can establish, with the millions of dollars which he has accumulated. The people are no beggars that they should appeal for alms. Society is no pauper that it should depend upon these gifts. We can build libraries and colleges and churches for ourselves. What we want to know is not how many libraries the spending of these millions of dollars will give us to-day, but how many human lives the earning of these millions took away from us yesterday. What we are eager to discover is

not how many souls the investment of this money in colleges and churches will save next year, but how many souls the accumulation of this money in business ruined last year. What we must find out is not how the multi-millionaire will give us his money in his old age, but, what is infinitely more important, how this multi-millionaire stole this money from us in his youth.

"Where will you give this money?"—that is the question asked of every millionaire to-day by the clergyman and the physician and the college-president and the charity-worker—and the question must be asked, since the money must be given somewhere. But the question which the prophet of the new religion will ask is "Where did you get this money?"—what hands has it bruised, what backs has it bent, what eyes has it blinded, what hearts has it broken, what lives has it cost, what men has it robbed of their strength, what women of their purity, what children of their beauty, with what tears is it wet, with what blood is it stained? These are the questions of the new religion—and not until these questions are answered so clearly and decisively that in the future wealth will be as vile as poverty, will this new religion of social justice be content.

Lastly, this transition from the ideal of charity to that of justice involves an absolute change in our whole conception of the church and its relation to society. It means that the church can no longer be content to deal with individuals, but must prepare to deal at first hand with society. It means that the church can no longer be interested merely in the in-

ward soul, but must be interested in the outward social conditions which environ the soul. It means that the church can no longer seek to save men out of the world, but must endeavour to save the world itself, while men are still living in it. It means that the church can no longer keep itself apart from education and politics and industry, but must enter into all these fields and speak the word of God. It means at last, after nineteen centuries of waiting, the Kingdom of God, for which Jesus lived and died!

Such is the message of justice, and not charity,—justice as the cure of the ills which make charity necessary. And what is this but the message, in modern phrase, of the brotherhood of man? Nor is it so very modern, after all. Isaiah said, “seek justice,” before he said, “relieve the oppressed.” Micah commanded that we “do justice,” before he commanded that we “love mercy.” And it was Jesus who said that we must “seek first the Kingdom of God.” Charity must last so long as men are poor; but if men are ever to be “redeemed,” it must be “with justice.”

## **ASPECTS OF THOUGHT**



## THE DILEMMA OF DENIAL

THE present address is occasioned by a fact which is more or less conspicuous, at the present time, in the life of every minister. I refer to the fact that the age in which we live, more truly perhaps than any other period in Christian history, is an age of very general unbelief. As I go about my work from day to day, and associate with all sorts and conditions of men, I am constantly being impressed by the number of people whom I meet, who not only have no interest in organised religion, but no longer believe the great intellectual conceptions which are commonly associated with religious thought. The idea of God and of the soul, the hope of immortality, the faith in a divine purpose, the confidence in human freedom,—all these ideas, which constitute the essence of religion as a system of thought, and the glory of the religious life as distinguished from the merely moral life, seem to be gone; and they are gone, not because people are ignorant or obstinate or irreverent, but simply and solely because they insist upon being honest in their thought. They deny these doctrines not because they want to deny them, but because they have to deny them, in order to be true to themselves.

The causes which have brought about this state of unbelief are not far to seek. They may all be found in



that marvellous development of scientific knowledge which distinguishes the nineteenth century as one of the greatest epochs in the entire history of the human race. This new knowledge of our time has affected the religious conceptions of mankind, it seems to me, in two ways.

In the first place, it has acquainted us with a vast number of facts regarding the history and character of the world in which we live, and the facts in every case have been fatal to the dogmas of the old theology. In physics and chemistry, in biology, psychology, astronomy, and geology, a new world has suddenly been revealed unto our gaze; and this world, as I need not point out, is wholly incompatible with those ideas of God and the soul which have constituted for so many centuries the very bone and sinew of Christian theology. The old conceptions of religion, in other words, have simply disappeared before the modern scientific discoveries of our time, just as a morning mist disappears before the blaze of a rising sun; and, what is infinitely more important, in the case of thousands upon thousands of honest and devout persons, the loss of these particular religious ideas has inevitably involved the loss of all religious conceptions whatsoever. Unable to believe in a God who is some kind of a magnified supernatural anthropomorphic being, living away off somewhere in the skies, they have ceased to believe in the existence of a divine spirit altogether. Unable to believe that God created the world in six days and rested on the seventh, as is described in the first chap-

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ter of *Genesis*, they have ceased to believe that God has any creative relation to the universe whatsoever. Unable to believe in the fall of man, the total depravity of human nature, and the atonement of Jesus Christ, they have ceased to believe that human life presents any problem of moral and spiritual redemption. Unable to believe in a heaven, where the good are received into eternal glory, and a hell, where the evil are received into eternal pain, they have ceased to believe that the human soul is destined to immortality. These people have lost the old theology, and they have not found any new theology to put into its place. They have lost one particular kind of religion, and thus are made to believe that they have lost all religion altogether. And they wander lonely and desolate along the pathways of human experience, their ideals quenched, their hopes destroyed, and their ambitions gone!

But this is not the only way in which these new scientific discoveries have affected the religious conceptions of our time. Not only have they acquainted us with a vast number of new and revolutionary facts which have undermined and destroyed the old theology, without apparently bringing any new and better theology to put in its place, but, in the second place, they have acquainted us with a new and revolutionary method of inquiry and investigation. In the old days, the theological method, which was based on the idea of authority, was in the ascendent; but now the scientific method, which is based on the idea of rationality, is almost universal. Yesterday, men assumed, as a mat-

ter of authoritative revelation, as a form of thought, almost as a condition of existence, that God lived, that the human soul was a reality, and that this soul was destined to some kind of immortality; and then, from these basic suppositions, which nobody thought of denying, they made the logical deductions regarding the facts of daily experience. To-day, we have just reversed the process, and start out by assuming absolutely nothing. We come before the world with a mind that is empty of all presuppositions whatsoever, and we study at first hand the facts of life. We observe these facts as best we can with the apparatus at our disposal. Having observed the facts, we then proceed to correlate and classify them, in order that some system may be introduced into what seems at first to be a hopeless chaos of disorder. And then, having observed and classified the facts, we proceed forthwith to interpret them — to find out, if possible, their significance — to see what they mean, if anything, and where they lead, if anywhere.

Now, it is just this new scientific method of inquiry which has done so much to dispel the religious faith of the human mind. The observation and correlation and interpretation of the facts of life have seemed to lead us only farther and farther away from the thought of God and the hope of immortality. Everywhere, in this world of experience, we look for God, but we do not seem to find him. Everywhere we search for some indications of the future life, but we do not seem to discover anything which gives to us assurance that

"God created man to be immortal." On the contrary, all the facts seem to point the other way. We know that man has a notion of God, and cherishes a great hope that, when he dies, he shall live again; but our scientific method of inquiry seems to show us that these are purely subjective fancies, and that there is nothing in the universe of real experience to correspond thereto. "Man has an idea of God and immortality, but, so far as we can see, the universe has no fact of either." The famous astronomer of the first French Empire, who said that he had searched every nook and cranny of the heavens with his telescope and nowhere had seen God, seems to have anticipated the experience of many of us in this century of rigid and unrelenting scientific investigation.

Here, now, in the great mass of new facts which have been given to us, and in the new scientific method of inquiry which is everywhere accepted to-day, are the two great reasons, to my mind, why so prevalent a spirit of denial is abroad in our time. Everywhere men are denying the old beliefs, or, if they are not denying them, are doubting them; while it seems as though there would soon be left no voice to repeat, in sincerity and truth, the splendid credos of the Christian centuries. The spiritual interpretation of life seems to have broken down all along the line, and sheer materialism to have usurped its place. Mephistopheles, the "spirit which denies," according to Goethe in his *Faust*, seems to have come at last into his own; and his disciples are everywhere to be heard declaring: There is no God

— Man has no soul — Immortality is a delusion and a snare! More truly to-day than in the day of Matthew Arnold, the tide of religious faith is running out. You remember how the English poet stood on Dover Beach, and in the slow ebbing of the tide seemed to see the picture of an ebbing flood of faith. "The Sea of Faith," he said — and more truly can we say it in this present age —

"The Sea of Faith

Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore  
Lay like the fold of a bright girdle furl'd.

But now I only hear

Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,

Retreating, to the breath

Of the night wind, down the vast edges drear

And naked shingles of the world."

Now it is just this question of the denial of all these spiritual verities of the ages which I want to discuss at this time. And first of all, I must make an admission which, to many of you, no doubt, will seem to give my whole case away to the disciples of Mephistopheles. I must admit, that is, at the very start, that I perfectly well understand that it is impossible to demonstrate that God exists, or that man is a spiritual creature, or that immortality is true. If there is any bigger fool than the man who says in his heart, "There is no God," I believe that it is the man who says in his heart, "I know that there is a God." When we come to the bottom-rock question, Can we really know these things? we must all of us admit that we cannot know them at all. We must become reverent agnostics with old Soc-

rates, and confess that we know only as we know that we do not know. To assert that we *do* know these things is to say what is obviously not true, and to be guilty of "that impiety of the pious," of which Herbert Spencer speaks with such justifiable contempt in the opening pages of his *First Principles*. In the Middle Ages, of course, men believed that they knew these things, because they also believed that these things had been revealed to the holy church; and what was said on the authority of the church was accepted without any question as infallible. Then, in the years immediately following the Renaissance, there came the period of the decline and fall of the conception of authority, and the gradual ascendancy of the reason. Says Professor Thilly, of Cornell University, in a recent article in the *Hibbert Journal* on "The Characteristics of the Present Age," wherein he tells the story of this period of history: "Reason became the authority in science and philosophy. The notion began to prevail that truth is not something to be handed down by authority or decreed by papal bulls, but something to be acquired, something to be achieved by free and impartial inquiry. . . . This apotheosis of reason," he continues, "is reached in the eighteenth century during the so-called period of enlightenment — the self-conceited age, as Goethe once called it. Reason now proudly sits upon the throne once occupied by ecclesiastical authority, and in her supreme self-confidence believes herself competent to solve all problems." But pride, in this case as in every other, only goes before a fall. Be-

ginning with Immanuel Kant's immortal work on *The Critique of Pure Reason*, wherein he showed that the human reason was incompetent to answer the great questions of God, immortality, and the freedom of the will, our age has grown ever more "sceptical of the power of the human reason to reach a rational explanation of the universe as a whole." "Philosophy," says Professor Thilly again, in this same essay, "has been relegated with theology to the lumber-room of thought. We cannot prove the existence of God, freedom, and immortality. Such questions, and indeed all questions of ultimates, are quite beyond our ken. We can know only what we experience; we are limited to our sense-perception, and even here we can reach only a high degree of probability."

We must admit, therefore, at the very start, that none of these great conceptions of theological speculation can be proved. We may observe facts as we will, we may correlate these facts exhaustively, we may interpret them according to the best categories of the understanding; but no one of these processes of investigation alone, nor all of them together, can lead us into the realm of certain knowledge. On the basis of pure reason, as the great Kant pointed out so many years ago, we must answer to the questions, Does God exist? Is the soul immortal? Is man free? — We do not know!

Such an admission, as I have said, may well seem to give away our whole case to the atheists and materialists. Once admit the impossibility of the rational dem-

onstration of ultimate truth, and it would seem indeed as though the battle were already lost. I would hasten to point out, however, that this is certainly very far from being the case. It may be true that we do not know that God exists, but this is very different from the assertion that we know that God does not exist. It may be true that we must admit that the reality of the immortal life has not been proved, but this is very far from admitting that the unreality of the immortal life has been proved. When we assume toward these ultimate questions, as every intelligent truth-seeker must assume, the attitude of the reverent agnostic, this means, not that these great speculations of the religious consciousness have been laid aside as disproved, but that the case is still open, and that the facts still await a final interpretation of their meaning. When we say that we do not know — let me repeat! — we mean not only that we do not know that God exists, or that the soul is immortal, or that man is free, but also that we do not know that God does not exist, or that the soul is not immortal, or that man is not free. We mean only that we can give no final answer either positive or negative — that no certain and absolute knowledge either one way or the other is yet possible — and that in such a case our task is that of observing, classifying, and interpreting ever more and more facts, and finding out what constitutes, in the light of these facts, the highest degree of probability. Our problem is identical with that of the detective, who is confronted with certain facts in a



case which may be that of murder, or suicide, or accident. He searches every square inch of the scene involved; then he classifies and studies all of the facts which he has been able to gather; and then knowing nothing for certain, he asks himself the question, What is the most probable theory to fit these facts, that of murder, or suicide, or accident? So the student of theology ransacks the universe in his search for facts; he correlates and studies these facts; and then, like the detective, knowing nothing for certain, he asks himself the question, What is the most probable theory to fit these facts, that of theism, or atheism, or something perhaps between?

Now it is when we come to this point of recognising that our failure to prove the existence of God involves also an equal failure to disprove the existence of God, or, in other words, that we are confronted by what we call an open question, it is then that we are able, for the first time, to reveal the essential weakness of the position of doubt, or even of denial. For we only have to consider for a few moments what the doctrine of denial really involves, to find ourselves face to face with a dilemma of a most confusing and embarrassing character.—In order to show you just what I mean by this dilemma of denial, let us consider that one great question which lies at the heart of all religious faith, and which is most commonly called into dispute at the present time. I refer of course to that deepest and highest of all religious problems, the idea of God.

By the idea of God, we mean the idea of an infinite

and eternal spirit, in whom we live and move and have our being. We mean that this world of organic and inorganic life is an expression, on the one hand, of a planning, ordering, directing spirit of Intelligence, and, on the other hand, of a spontaneous, watchful, eager spirit of Love. We mean that we believe that there is living somewhere and somehow a thinking, loving, active Divine Spirit, who constitutes in his eternal, infinite, and omnipresent being, the reality of all things; and who may be roughly described, perhaps, as bearing the same relation to the material universe that our souls bear to our physical bodies. Now it is just this conception of an overruling Intelligence and Love which the atheist or the materialist denies. He asserts that the facts of life, when viewed in the light of reason, destroy this whole conception of God.

In the first place, he declares, this universe is not so much an organism, as it is a machine; and we need, in order to explain its origin and progress, not a soul, but only those mechanical laws and forces which have been revealed to us so clearly by the chemists and physicists of the nineteenth century. Thus Prof. Ernst Haeckel, in his *Riddle of the Universe*, speaking of the origin of things, declares that he does not need any hypothesis of God to answer the problem of the genesis of the universe. I trace back step by step, he says, the line of evolutionary progress, until I come to a great void of empty space, which contains only one little atom of matter and one little particle of energy. Drifting around in the great void, it chances at last, not by

design but merely by accident, that the atom of matter and the spark of energy come together, and instantly, in accordance with the fundamental law of life, the evolutionary process is begun.

In the second place, not only does the materialist declare that we do not need any thought of God in order to explain the origin and development of the material universe, but he also declares that, even though we might think that we needed such a First Cause, as the metaphysical explanation of things, yet the processes of life certainly give no evidence of being directed by a divine Intelligence and Love. What, for example, he says, are we to think of the history of evolution? Does this show any signs of being planned and directed by a divine Intelligence? Is this the kind of method of accomplishing a specific end which would be adopted by anybody who desired to lay claim to the possession of even ordinary sanity? Could we conceive of any process which is more blundering, more hit-and-miss, and, above all things, more wasteful? The evolving ages *have* brought forth a man, but at what a cost of blood and tears and agony — one achievement at the cost of a million failures. What would we think of a man, said the great Tyndall at one time, who should desire to shoot a rabbit, and, instead of taking a rifle and shooting the animal he was after, should take a whole regiment of artillery and proceed to blow the landscape to pieces? We would say that the man was insane; and Tyndall, answering his own question,

declared that this is just the insane thing that God has been doing in his process of evolution.

Then, too, consider, if you will, those particular objects which have been most frequently employed as the evidence of a supreme Designer and Artificer existing behind the material world. Here is the human eye, for example! This has been offered again and again by the believer as a triumph of intelligent planning and skilful workmanship — a perfect adaptation of means to ends. And yet, says the materialist, we know to-day that the eye, as a matter of fact, is a very defective organ; so defective, that any master of optics who could not plan and manufacture a better organ of vision than the eye would be considered a disgrace to his profession. And this is only one illustration among many! Everywhere, in the material universe, in short, we find not order and system, economy and beauty, such as we would expect in the work of an intelligent creator, but disorder and confusion, waste and ugliness, imperfection and incompleteness, defect of adaptation of means to ends, blunders, failures.

Then, turning away from the question of God as Intelligence to the question of God as Love, what are we to say as to the pain and the cruelty and the evil that are implicit in the cosmic process — the cataclysms and disasters, the famines and pestilences, the awful agonies of accident, old age and death? Do you mean to say that we can reconcile these hideous facts with a God who is described as a Father, and whose mercy is said to be

from everlasting to everlasting? The out-and-out deniers of God's existence are not the only ones who have been depressed and overwhelmed by the misery that seems to be attendant upon existence. John Stuart Mill, you remember, who believed most emphatically in God, asserted that these facts proved that the Creator, while all-loving, was certainly not omnipotent; and William James, in our day, was so impressed, not only by the disorder of the universe, but by its awful pain, that while he clung to his faith in a divine principle, he was forced to believe that this principle was either pluralistic and thus divided against itself, or else powerless to do the things which, as the Creator and Ruler of a universe, it wanted to do.

Here, of course, is a mere suggestion of the materialistic argument. But even these few facts are sufficient perhaps to show some of the difficulties in the way of an unquestioning theistic faith. These difficulties, of course, do not disprove the existence of God, but they certainly go far toward making such a divine reality improbable. In other words, the facts of life make it hard to believe in an all-wise, all-loving, and all-powerful God; and, in the face of the fact that we do not need him to explain the origin of things, it is only reasonable, is it not, to deny his existence?

Now I am not going to stop to refute these various objections to the belief in a God who is at once intelligent, merciful, and omnipotent. I am concerned at this time not with answering the argument of materialism but only with showing the dilemma into which this

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argument inevitably leads us. And that it is a very real and peculiarly embarrassing dilemma, becomes evident when we ask the materialist what explanation of the universe he has to offer in place of the theistic explanation which he has denied.

When we ask this question, we find, first of all, that he fails utterly to give any explanation of the origin of things. He takes us back, to be sure, to that first atom of matter and that first particle of energy, the alliance of which started the unfolding process of evolutionary development; but nowhere, so far as I know, has he ever attempted to answer the question as to where this atom of matter and this particle of energy themselves first came from, how they happened to be floating around in the empty spaces of the universe, and how, when they came together, there was a law of evolution all ready to guide and control their future development. The predicament of the materialist, in other words, is exactly that of the Hindoo philosopher, who declared that the earth rested upon an elephant, and the elephant upon a tortoise, but was so unkind as to leave the tortoise, like Mohammed's coffin, hanging suspended in mid-air.

But not pressing this point,— which, by the way, if properly developed, is absolutely fatal to the whole philosophy of denial — let us consider what this denial of God really means from the standpoint of the world as it exists to-day. If theism means that, behind the universe, as the basic reality of life, there is an ordering Intelligence and a brooding Love, atheism or material-

ism must mean, as we have been seeing, that behind the universe there is not an ordering Intelligence and not a brooding Love. It denies that there is any mind or being which is the cause and providence of the universe, and which intentionally "produces the order, beauty, and harmony thereof, the constant modes of operation therein." Nay, it goes farther and denies that there is any law, order, or harmony in existence, or any constant modes of operation in the world. The materialist asserts that the universe is made up first of inert matter and secondly of unconscious energy, and that everything that the universe contains is the mechanical result of the constant interaction of these two realities. If there is any beauty or order or harmony in the process, it was not planned or directed — planned, that is, by no divine spirit of Intelligence and directed by no divine spirit of Love. If such order or harmony has appeared at all, it has come only as the result of accident or chance, and is likely at any moment to disappear just as it has come. It is here in this word "chance" that you come to the very heart of the philosophy of denial. Just as the essential feature of theism is an overruling Mind, so the essential feature of atheism is chance. Just as the world, according to the theistic point of view, is the result of a planning and creating and guiding Intelligence and an ever-watching Love, so the world, according to the atheistic point of view, is the result of mere accident. Just as the universe, according to the man who believes, is to be regarded as the "handiwork" of God, so the universe,

according to the man who denies, is to be regarded as a "fortuitous concourse of atoms." In the one case, there is plan, conscious design, order, which could not have been otherwise than it is ; in the other case, chance, accident, fortuity, which could just as easily have been something else as to be what it actually is. Here is the fundamental difference between these two philosophies.<sup>1</sup>

Now suppose we test this theory of chance, which is offered us by materialism as the only alternative of the theistic hypothesis, by the actual facts of experience in so far as we know these facts — and what is the result?

Turn, for example, to the field of astronomy! Here do we find ourselves in the midst of a great system of stars, with a sun at the centre and numerous planets round about. All of these planets are distributed in a certain ratio of distance, and they move round the sun with a certain velocity exactly proportionate to their distance from the sun, and their relation to one another. These planets move in paths of the same form, they are controlled by the same laws of motion, they receive and emit light in the same way. The laws, which are the constant modes of planetary operation, are exceedingly intricate, and yet they conform to the point of absolute simplicity. And they are so exact, and are obeyed with such perfect accuracy, that "we may go back to the time of Thales, four hundred

<sup>1</sup> See Theodore Parker's *Theism and Atheism*, Centenary Edition, pp. 64 and 65.



years before the birth of Christ, calculate the famous eclipse of the moon which took place during his lifetime, and find that it occurred just as the historians of that day relate; and we may go forward five years or five hundred years or five thousand years, and calculate a future eclipse of the moon with the same precision. Indeed so accurate are these laws that an astronomer, studying the perturbations of a planet, may conjecture the existence of another planet never yet discovered, and then, turning his telescope to the calculated point in the heavens, fix his eye upon what the eye of man has never discovered before.”<sup>1</sup> And it is this perfect system which the materialist must assert is the result of chance, and shows no mind or purpose whatsoever in the universe.

Or take the other process of evolution itself, which is so often described as wasteful, blundering, and stupid! Here, in the last analysis, do we see a process which is as accurate and beautiful as the unfolding of a flower from leaf to bud, from bud to blossom, from blossom to ripening fruit. See with what precision the inorganic has passed over into the organic, the vegetable into the animal, and the animal into the human. See what an infinite variety of living forms have been produced from which to make the selection of the best, and how each form, even though finally rejected, has played its part and done its work as an indispensable member of the expanding whole. See how perfectly the organism and its environment have interacted, and al-

<sup>1</sup> See Parker's *Theism and Atheism*, p. 67.

ways for the ultimate achievement of progress. See the marvels of adaptation and the miracles of development. See how every step of all the process has been in its final result an onward one, until at last the pinnacle was reached in man, who stands at once as the heir of all the past and the prophecy of all the future. See with what perfection the survivals have been made the survival of the fittest. See with what flawless beauty the unfolding has gone on from one age to another, until the human soul at the heart of it all is disclosed to the eye of heaven! And all this line of evolution, you say, which never seriously deviated from its appointed path nor swerved from the direction of its goal, is nothing but the result of accident and chance, and might just as well have ended with the dinosaurs and mastodons and saurians of the heroic age, or even reverted to the protozoa in the primeval slime, as have continued onward and upward to the glory of creative manhood!

Or take the history of man himself — a wonderful pageant of struggle and of triumph. See how, through all the ages, men have slowly been fighting their way upward from barbarism to civilisation. See how the family has developed into the village, the village into the city, the city into the state, and the state into the nation. See how kings have battled with kings, and races warred with races. See how empires have tumbled and kingdoms fallen to ruin. See how nations have been extinguished and even races blotted out. See how saints have lived and suffered, prophets spoken in

vain for truth, poets dreamed fruitlessly their lovely visions, and martyrs died their agonising deaths. See how the strong have crushed the weak, and the rich ground the faces of the poor. See how wealth and luxury and ease have rotted the lives of men and sent them to untimely graves. See how great clouds of darkness have overwhelmed the light, wrong triumphed over right, and error risen victorious over truth. And see, too, how through all this welter and chaos of human passion, the progress of mankind has still been onward and upward forever, light has still shone out of darkness, and truth still inherited "the eternal years of God." The history of manhood may be the result of accident, and may perhaps be explained on the basis of chance, but if so, then miracles have never ceased, and the ways of fate are beyond all understanding.

Here, now, are only a few suggestions as to what it means to test the philosophy of denial with the facts of life, and is it not already evident that we are face to face with an embarrassing dilemma? It may be, of course, that all these wonderful phenomena, which I have described, are the results not of intelligence but of chance. It may be that it was chance which organised the solar universe so delicately and so accurately that, as Richard Watson Gilder puts it in his little poem, "The Sun Dial," if the shadow on the dial varied even by "the width of a child's eyelash,"

"The seas would devour the mountains,  
And the stars together crash."

It may be that it was chance that controlled, from beginning to end, the process of evolution, so that, as William Watson puts it, in his poem, "The Hope of the World," it was

"Some random throw  
Of heedless Nature's die  
That from estate so low  
Uplifted man so high.  
Through untold æons vast  
She let him lurk and cower;  
'T would seem he climbed at last,  
In mere fortuitous hour,  
Child of a thousand chances, 'neath the indifferent sky."

It may be that it was chance that was behind the strange and wonderful march of historic events through the uncounted ages of the past. All this may be true! But I for one must confess that I find it harder to believe this interpretation of the facts, than to believe, in the face of such blunders and imperfections as the world may seem to contain, that God lives and controls the progress of creation. Grant all the difficulties that the materialist puts in the way of your theistic faith. Grant that, from one point of view, the world seems incomplete, imperfect, cruel, wasteful, stupid. Grant that it would indeed seem as though a divine and eternal Intelligence, all-powerful and all-loving, could have made a better job of it. Grant all these objections, I say! And yet, when you contrast these difficulties, which are involved in the belief in God as the ruling principle of the universe, with the difficulties which are

involved in the alternative belief in blind and heedless chance as the ruling principle of the universe, I contend that the theistic faith is simplicity itself. Say what you will, when I look at the heavens above my head, some day when the sun is high in a sky of perfect blue, or some night when a million stars are shining in the blackness like a million candles, I know that the Psalmist was near the truth when he said, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handiwork; day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge." Say what you will, when I meditate upon the story of evolution, and consider

"A fire-mist and a planet,  
A crystal and a cell,  
A jellyfish and a saurian,  
And caves where the cave-men dwell;  
Then a sense of law and beauty,  
And a face turned from the clod ——"

I know that the poet was right when he declared that we should call this not merely evolution but God. Say what you will, when I read in the silent watches of the night the magic story of mankind, read how men have lived and suffered and died, borne witness to the truth and perished, fought for righteousness and expired, struck a blow for freedom and disappeared,— and then consider what is the outcome of it all, I know that the poet is again right when he declares that in and through and over all our human life is a "Power that makes for righteousness"! I see the difficulties in the way of be-

lieving in God, but I see also the difficulties in the way of not believing in God. Neither theory answers all questions; neither hypothesis satisfies all doubts. But when you put God over against chance, Intelligence over against accident, Love over against blind energy, as the explanation of the facts of life, then I for one find it easier, simpler, more rational to believe in God.

When you can show me that a man can throw down upon a table a handful of wheels and springs, and that some day by chance they will fall into the shape and fashion of a watch, and proceed to keep accurate time; when you can show me that a painter can take his colours and throw them upon a canvas, and some day by chance they will fall into the perfect beauty of a Raphael Madonna, or a Corot landscape; when you can show me that a printer in his printing-room can throw a font of type upon the floor, and the letters some day will fall by chance into a Shakespeare's *Hamlet* or a Milton's *Paradise Lost*; when you can show me that an army with its brigades, regiments, and companies can march into battle with no single officer in command of any single body of men, and can some day by chance win a victory over a Bonaparte or a Marlborough; when you can show me that these things are possible, then I will at least be ready to believe that this universe in which we live may possibly be the product of accident and not of a divine Intelligence and Love. How impressive was the recorded testimony of Alfred Russel Wallace! Here was one of the greatest scientists of our age — a man to whom all the pages of human knowledge

were open and by whom they were carefully read — a man forever immortal as the co-discoverer with Darwin of the truth of evolution. In his old age, as the ripest fruit of all his learning, he published a great book entitled *The World of Life*; and he declared, as the final conclusion of all his studies, that this world of life is “a manifestation of creative power, directive mind, and ultimate purpose.” And this, not because it had been proved, but simply because it was sensible!

Such is the dilemma of denial, as illustrated by the thought of God. The philosophy of denial shows us that there are very real difficulties in believing in God; but it shows us also that there are greater difficulties in not believing in God. And what is true here of the thought of God is true also of all the other problems of existence. Nothing is easier than to show that it is impossible for a reasonable man to believe in immortality, unless it be to show that it is impossible for a reasonable man not to believe in immortality. Nothing is more certain than the unreasonableness of believing in the freedom of the will, unless it be the unreasonableness of not believing in the freedom of the will. Nothing is more ridiculous than belief, unless it be unbelief. You satisfy yourself, in the face of all the contrary facts of life, that you cannot accept these great articles of faith — you fortify your doubts and buttress your denials — and then comes to you the experience that came to the Bishop in Robert Browning's poem, “Bishop Blougram's Apology.” — “How can we

guard our unbelief?" queries the Bishop; "how make it bear fruit to us?"

"Just when we are safest, there's a sunset touch,  
A fancy from a flower-bell, some one's death,  
A chorus ending from Euripides —  
And that's enough for fifty hopes and fears,  
As old and new at once as nature's self,  
To rap and knock and enter in our soul,  
Take hands and dance there, a fantastic ring,  
Round the ancient idol, on his base again,  
The grand Perhaps."

It must by now be evident what I mean by the dilemma of denial. I mean simply that in trying to save us from the very real difficulties involved in believing in God, and immortality, and human freedom, the philosophy of denial finds itself confronted by the dilemma of getting us into worse difficulties than those from which it would extricate us. It is hard to believe these things, but it is harder not to believe them. And if you ask how it is that many of the greatest scientists have allowed themselves to be trapped by this dilemma, you will find that it is only because they have not been faithful to their own profound principles of scientific inquiry. For what do they do in their laboratories, when they have a set of facts before them which they are trying to explain? They adopt one theory after another as probable explanations of these facts. Each one has its difficulties — and they choose the one which has the fewest difficulties as the one which has the highest de-



gree of probable truth. If this theory, like the others, still has difficulties, then the scientist assumes, not that the theory is untrue, but that his vision is scant and his knowledge limited, and that with deeper vision and wider knowledge the difficulties will disappear. So with these great hopes of religion. The theories of God and immortality and the rest have their difficulties; but they explain the known facts of life better than any other theories which have ever been conceived by the mind of man, and therefore have the highest degree of probable truth. If the difficulties seem great, we must remember that finite minds are here confronting infinite realities, and that eyes which can see only a little way are gazing into infinite distances; and that, if we could know all and see to the end, the difficulties might melt away. We must remember that eternal light is being reflected through temporal minds, and therefore is stained, distorted, dimmed, as the sunlight which struggles faintly through a dusty window. Whenever I am tempted to be troubled because I cannot answer all the questions which are raised up by my belief in God, I think first of the difficulties that are raised by my denial of God; and secondly I think of those glorious lines from Shelley's "Adonais":

" The One remains, the many change and pass;  
Heaven's light forever shines, Earth's shadows fly;  
Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,  
Stains the white radiance of Eternity,  
Until Death tramples it to fragments.

“ That Light whose smile kindles the Universe,  
That Beauty in which all things work and move,  
That Benediction, which the eclipsing curse  
Of birth can quench not, that maintaining Love  
Which through the web of being blindly wove  
By man and beast and earth and air and sea,  
Burns bright or dim, as each are mirrors of  
The fire for which all thirst, now beams on me,  
Consuming the last clouds of cold mortality.”

## IS GOD A PERSONALITY?

THE question as to whether God is a personality or not, is one which seems far removed from the realities of human life and the practical problems of every day existence. We are tempted to protest that this problem is a pure matter of philosophical speculation, and that it makes not the slightest difference to our moral and spiritual interests as individuals whether it is answered in the affirmative or in the negative. What of it, if God is a personality? And what of it also, if he is not?

At first sight it may seem as though this protest against the remote and inconsequential character of our subject were well-founded. If we will only pause for a moment, however, before giving expression to our impatience, and look into this matter with a little sympathy and care, I am positive that we shall find that this inquiry as to whether God is a personality or not is one of the most vital and important to which we can possibly give our attention. For upon the answer to this question there depend in no small measure the validity and permanence of all that we have come to mean by religion. If God is not a person, if the divine spirit in whom we live and move and have our being is not personal as we are personal, if the fundamental reality which is in all and through all and over all cannot be addressed by the personal pronoun and

cannot be accurately described as a Father and a Friend, then why should we build our churches, or speak our prayers, or join in our public services of worship, or do the deeds of righteousness and love? What is a prayer but a mockery, if there is nobody who listens to the words we utter? What is a church but a monument to superstition, if there is nobody who cares what is done before its altars? What are the sacrifices of the prophets and the apostles and the martyrs but so much waste, if there is nobody on whose behalf and for whose sake the sacrifices are paid? The thought of God as a personality is a necessary condition of everything that is contained within the field of religious experience. If this thought can be justified, then every idea and practice of religion can be justified against the most violent assaults of its enemies; but if this thought cannot be justified, then the whole fabric of religion must tumble like a house of cards. Professor Hocking, of Harvard University, sums it all up in a single sentence in his recent book on *The Meaning of God in Human Experience*, when he says, "The alternative to the thought of God as Person is the thought of him as Substance, as Energy, and chiefly as Law." Just stop and consider for a moment what it would mean for us to try to obey the will of Substance, or love Energy, or worship Law, and you will have some idea at least of how near this question of the personality of God really comes to the heart of religion. We are wasting no time, we are engaging in no vain speculation, we are wandering not far from the basic realities of life, in

seeking to discover what reason we have for thinking of God as a person and worshipping him in very truth as "our Father who (is) in heaven"!

As our very first step in the discussion of the problem which is before us, as in the discussion of every problem of which I have any knowledge, it is important that we should define the terms which we are using, so that we may not become involved in unnecessary misunderstanding and confusion. Before we ask, in other words, if God is a personality, we must make it perfectly clear as to what we mean by personality.

As ordinarily used, the word "person," or "personality," has a material or physical content. When we think or speak of a certain person, we always have in mind a being who has a definite form and shape, and occupies a specific locality in space. We distinguish this person from all other persons by certain characteristics which are distinctive of his physical appearance, such as the colour of his hair, the shape of his nose, and the outline of his figure. This person is subject to all sorts of restrictions and limitations, and is exposed to all sorts of perils and disasters. He is handsome or ugly, he is well or sick, he is whole or maimed, he is living or dead. These are the elements, wholly outward and physical in their nature, as you can see, which go to make up the meaning of the word "person" as it is used in common parlance. This interpretation is seen in its extreme form when I speak of "my person" with reference only to my body, or use the stereotyped legal phrase of "crimes against the person," with spe-

cific reference to attacks upon one's physical integrity.

This, I take it, is the common idea of personality; and right here do we find the explanation of the fact that there was never before a time in the whole history of human thought, perhaps, when men found it so difficult to conceive of God as a personality as they do to-day. The Greeks had no trouble in matching up their idea of God with this understanding of what is meant by personality. They thought of their gods frankly and openly after the analogy of human beings. Zeus, Hera, Apollo, Aphrodite, Hephæstos, all the inhabitants of Olympus, had separate and distinct individualities, and walked and talked with men as easily and naturally as men walked and talked with one another. The same thing is true also of the ancient Hebrews. We find in the Old Testament one deity in place of many deities, and this Jehovah, as he is called, is a much loftier being, from the moral point of view, than any that can be found in the Greek or Roman pantheon. But he is still a god who can walk in the Garden of Eden like a tired man "in the cool of the day," talk to Moses upon Sinai like the commander of the host, and appear to Isaiah in the Temple like a great king upon his throne.

Now all such conceptions as these have of course become impossible at this late day. We think of God, if we think of him at all, as a kind of spirit which is immanent in the things of sense, but which has no such outward or visible form as we have learned to associate with the idea of human personality. I suppose that

there are still some people in the world to-day who think of God, as most children certainly think of him, as a great ruler who has hands and feet, and speaks with a voice, and looks upon the universe with eyes, and hears the prayers of men with ears. But most of us have certainly passed beyond these crude conceptions for good and all. We may think of God after the likeness of a man, and address him as we would address a fellow-being — but this is only because we are unable to think and speak in any other way. At heart, we know that God, if he exists at all, is spirit, and thus cannot rightly be conceived in any way after the physical appearance of a human being. "The advance of religion," says Professor Hocking, with perfect accuracy, in the book to which I have just referred, "has been very largely from personality to impersonality." As our knowledge of the universe has increased and our conception of life has widened and deepened, the idea of God has become in our minds ever more indefinite, intangible, almost unreal, as it has become ever more spiritual, until to-day we have come to the point of denying that God is a personality altogether. He is Energy, he is Law, he is Spirit, he is an all-pervasive Presence, if you will, but he is not a person as we commonly employ that word in our daily intercourse with men. Indeed, it would seem, as Professor Hocking intimates, that "impersonality" is the fundamental attribute of God, as he is understood and interpreted and approached at the present day.

Here, now, is a very real difficulty in the way of any

favourable answer to our question, Is God a Personality? — but it is a difficulty which is involved not in our conception of divinity, but in our conception of personality. Thus far we have been interpreting personality in material or physical terms. But now I want to ask if this is really the way in which personality should be defined? Is this idea of personality as having to do with the form and features of a human body the only one that can be accepted, or indeed is it one which can rightly be accepted at all? Is this really what we mean by “personality,” or is it only what we think we mean in the free-and-easy language of the street?

A suggestion that this interpretation of the word is very far from being either definite or fundamental, is given by the fact that rocks and trees and especially animals have all the characteristics which we have just been associating with a human personality, and yet we never think of regarding them as persons. In order to show, however, with perfect clearness how remote is the true conception of personality from the body, and everything pertaining to the material attributes and relationships of the body, I want to stay right here in our own field of human experience, and show what we mean by the word “personality,” when we use it carefully and scientifically.

In the year, 1811, there was living in the wilderness of western Pennsylvania, a young girl by the name of Mary Reynolds. One morning, long after her habitual time for rising, she was found lying in a deep sleep, from which it was impossible to rouse her. After some



eighteen or twenty hours, she awakened naturally, but in a wholly unnatural state of consciousness. She knew nothing, remembered nothing, recognised nothing. She had apparently never seen her parents, brothers, sisters, and friends before — had never known them — was not aware that such persons had ever existed. To the scenes by which she was surrounded — the house, the fields, the mountains — she was a total stranger. She was even ignorant of all that she had been taught from childhood — she could not speak or even connect words with things. She had not the slightest consciousness that she had ever existed previous to the moment in which she awoke from her mysterious slumber. “In a word, she was an infant, just born, yet born in a condition of maturity.”

The change in her mental state, however, was not the only transformation which had taken place. More remarkable even than her ignorance was her altered disposition. Hitherto she had been taciturn and reserved, with a marked tendency toward melancholy and morbid introspection. Now she was cheerful and buoyant to an extreme degree. She was extravagantly fond of company, and yet just as fond of the world of nature, to which she had hitherto been indifferent. In all of her emotions, as well as in her thought, she “was totally and absolutely changed.”

This strange condition of new birth, if I may call it such, continued for about five weeks, during which the girl came to know her family and friends, and was taught again to read and write. At the end of this

time, however, there came another period of protracted slumber, and when at last she awoke, she was herself again. She instantly recognised her brothers and sisters as though nothing had happened, and immediately took up the thread of the old life just where it had been dropped five weeks before. She now had all the knowledge which she had possessed previous to the strange interval of transformation, but not the slightest trace of a recollection of what had happened in this interval. She was only surprised that in what to her was the space of a single night, so many things had changed, especially in the outer world of nature. And of course, along with the rest, her natural disposition returned just as it had been before.

All went well for a brief time, when again there came the mysterious slumber, and the girl awoke in her second state, and took up her new life just where she had left it when she had passed from that state some weeks before, and again not knowing anything that had intervened between these two periods of sleep. And so began a long series of alternations from one state to another, which continued at intervals of varying length for fifteen or sixteen years, but finally ceased when she attained the age of thirty-five or thirty-six, leaving the girl permanently in her second state. In this she remained without any further change during the last quarter of a century of her life.

I have referred somewhat at length to this story of Mary Reynolds, which is told in detail in Professor James's *Principles of Psychology*, for the reason that

it is a perfect illustration of what is really meant by personality. Here do we see that, from the psychological standpoint, at least, personality has nothing to do with the body or any of its parts. During all of the successive alternations of these fifteen or sixteen years, Mary Reynolds was exactly the same person, if I may so express it, so far as her face and figure were concerned. She had the same hair, the same eyes, the same voice, the same hands and feet, the same facial outline and physical form, in the one state as in the other. A person looking at her mere personal appearance, without any knowledge of her mental condition or emotional reactions, could have no means of knowing whether she was in the first state or in the second. And yet psychologists agree that this is a case of "dual personality"—that right here, in this same identical physical organism, there are two persons instead of one. At one moment Mary Reynolds was Mary Reynolds; at the next moment, Mary Reynolds was not Mary Reynolds, but somebody else. Here in the same body, at intervals of a few weeks, were two persons, separate and distinct. And the remarkable fact is that nobody thought of confusing these two persons, or ever failed to recognise these two persons, merely because the physical features were the same in both cases. All of which means, does it not, if it means anything at all, that by personality we most certainly do not mean a human body or any of the physical features of a human body?

The case of Mary Reynolds, like every similar case.

of "dual personality," proves conclusively, whatever else it may or may not prove, that a person, fundamentally speaking, is not a material figure which occupies so much space, presents a certain outline, and moves in a certain way — that a person is not something material at all, but something spiritual. A personality is not the body, but the life within the body, the soul which inhabits the body. The person is the Self, the Ego, the I — that inward centre of conscious spiritual life which thinks and wills and loves — which thrills the pressure of the hand, kindles the light in the eye, and moves the lips with ordered speech — which remains steadfast and unafraid while the body is bruised by accident or ravaged by disease — which can even take the body, like a tool to be used, or a weapon to be broken, or a sacrifice to be offered up for the sake of the dreams and visions of the spirit, and throw it carelessly away — which fills the body with life while it is present, and leaves it cold and dead as clay when it departs. It is true, of course, that it is the almost unvarying rule for a single body to be the tool or medium or tenement of a single personality, or self — and thus have we been tempted into the easy error of thinking that the body is itself the personality. But it only needs an exceptional incident like that of Mary Reynolds, as indeed it would seem to have needed only the very commonplace incident of death, to show us our mistake. Personality, at bottom, is not material but spiritual. A person, in the last analysis, is not a body, but a soul! All of which is clearly enough revealed,

even in our common speech of every day, when we say, This man has personality!—by which we mean that he has that peculiar spiritual power which leaps like flame from soul to soul, and makes a man a leader of his kind!

Now here is what I believe to be the essence of personality. And right here do we find how far we were from the truth when we defined personality in material and physical terms, and how unreal therefore was our difficulty in regarding God as a personality. God, by the very definition of his being, is a spirit. So also is a person, by the very definition of his being, a spirit likewise. And since spirit, so far as we have ever been able to discover, is always one and the same thing in this great universe of ours, what could be more natural, or indeed inevitable, than that God should be a person after the analogy of a human personality? May it not be true, in other words, that in the realm of theology exactly as in the realm of geometry, things equal to the same thing are equal to each other? Certainly this is possible. There is no initial difficulty in the way of this interpretation of divine personality as there was in the way of the other. It is entirely reasonable to believe, as it was not reasonable to believe in the earlier instance, that God may be a person. This much is at least established by our argument up to this point. Now it only remains to show that there is very good evidence for believing that this is actually the case — that God not only *may* be a person but *is* a person — to complete my argument.

In order to see with perfect clearness the indications that God is a person exactly as we are persons, it will be necessary to consider what are the distinctive marks of personality. Why do I assume, for example, that you are a personality, as a stone, or a tree, or a dog, is not a personality? This question is answered by showing that you display certain characteristics in the course of your individual activity, which are not displayed by the stone, or the tree, or the dog, and which clearly indicate, as nothing in the existence of these objects indicates, the essentially spiritual basis of your life. Now if God is a personality, as you are a personality — and that is the thing that we want to prove, if possible! — then it is reasonable to suppose, is it not, that his spirit will display the same distinctive characteristics as your spirit. Or — to reverse the argument! — if we can find in the material universe the same characteristic marks of the spirit that we find in the case of a human body, then we have a right to believe, have we not, that in this universe, as in this body, there is immanent exactly the same type of personality. The same facts, in other words, must lead us back to the same conclusion. If the divine spirit acts the same as the human spirit, then we may justly say that the one is as much personal as the other.

I turn therefore to the question, now, as to what are the distinctive marks of personality? And in reply I state that these marks are three in number. 1. 2. 3.

In the old days of the famous Eden Musée, on 23d Street, there was located in one of the upper rooms

a world-famous mechanical chess-player. Here, before a chess-board, there sat a large waxen figure, robed without in impressive Turkish garments, and filled within with elaborate machinery. This machinery, it was said, was so cleverly devised, as to enable the figure to play a game of chess which would usually defeat the best efforts of even the most skilful experts. We go to the Musée, sit down and start a game — and, little by little, we begin to wonder, and then to grow skeptical, and then at last to protest openly. Here is a game, we say, the development of which is determined not at all by mechanical rules, nor even by the hazards of chance, but strictly by the mental processes of the players. And yet here we are asked to believe that this dummy figure, which is playing the game so well that we are being speedily and ignominiously defeated, is a machine and nothing more. Impossible, we say! It takes brains to play chess. This mechanical figure is a mask. There is a person concealed somewhere about this mysterious Turk, who is thinking rationally, and is revealing his presence, in spite of himself, by the movements of the pawns and bishops upon the board!

Now right here, in this illustration, do we see the first mark of personality — namely, rationality. Whenever we see a living creature who shows by his actions that he can carry on the logical processes of thought, we say at once that he is not a creature but a person. Nay more, whenever we see the evidences of reason or intellectuality at work, as in the case of the mechanical chess-player, we agree at once that these

evidences prove the presence of a personality, even though we have no other visible signs of this presence. All we need is the sign that thought is acting upon things, to convince us that we are face to face with a person!

But while rationality may thus unquestionably bring us face to face with a person, it just as unquestionably fails to bring us face to face with the whole person. We felt this strongly enough as we played chess with the mechanical chess-player. We knew that we were playing not with a machine but with a person, because we could see the evidences of the person's thought; but we felt a sense of uncanny mystery all the same, for the simple reason that these evidences of thought revealed only a part of the personality with which we were engaged, and this the less important part. This revelation of personality, indeed, was so unsatisfactory that we felt more sense of personal companionship in our dog than in this hidden mind which moved piece after piece upon the chess-board with unerring accuracy and precision.

This brings us at once to what I regard as the second mark of personality — namely, feeling. A full-rounded personality is characterised not only by power of thought but also by capacity for emotion. A person not only reasons, but he also loves. So important, to our minds, is this element of personality, that when we see such a creature as the dog, who has had his instincts developed, through long association with humanity, into a kind of rudimentary affection and loy-



alty, we are tempted to endow him with personality and treat him exactly as we would treat a human being. And in the same way, when we see a person who is defective on the emotional side of his nature, we feel that his personality is just to this extent imperfect, and the man himself to the same extent not a man. It matters not how great may be the intellectual endowment or how stupendous the power of thought, if a man shows no emotion in the art-gallery or the opera-house or out in the open fields, if he uncovers no sign of the great deeps of joy and sorrow and spiritual aspiration, if he reveals no capacity for friendship, and if he is never moved to sacrifice by devotion to some great cause, then we feel that we have a right to regard him, from the point of view of personality, as just as much a defective as a man who is feeble-minded.

A striking illustration of this fact is shown in the case of Herbert Spencer. This man was the greatest thinker that the world has seen since Aristotle — perhaps the greatest thinker that the world has ever seen. But on his emotional side, strangely enough, he was hopelessly deficient. He had no appreciation of painting or literature or music, and never knew what it was to gaze upon a lovely vale or on a lofty mountain with rapture. He had no enduring or necessary friendships, and no liking even for children. Never, from the beginning to the end of his more than eighty years, did he look upon a woman to love her. And the one time in his life when he abandoned his own work to serve a public cause, he describes in his *Autobiography* as “a

generous mistake," and "the most unfortunate incident" in his career. Admire this man as much as we may, or must, as a great thinker, we simply cannot love him. And for this all-sufficient reason do we agree to describe him as personally defective. Compare his spirit with that of Christ, and we may see at once the part that emotion plays in the make-up of personality.

Then there is a third mark of personality which is perhaps the most fundamental of the three. If you will recall to your minds, once again, the case of Mary Reynolds, you will remember that this young woman was characterised by the alternating presence of two personalities. Now why, let me ask you, do we agree that in her case there were two personalities, and not one, or even three? The answer to this question is to be found in the fact that the basic characteristic of personality is unity. All the thoughts and emotions of a person, when he is a person, fit in together, like the parts of a machine, and constitute a perfect whole. There can be no question about your personality or mine, for the reason that everything we do and say and feel combine naturally together into a unity, and make a single impression on the spectator. In the case of Mary Reynolds, however, it was different. Here was a series of thoughts and emotions on the one side which did not fit in at all with a companion series of thoughts and emotions on the other. The one series constituted a unity, and the other series also constituted a unity; but the two together constituted not a unity, but a duality. Therefore was there no choice but to

say that in Mary Reynolds's life there were two personalities, instead of one. And of course these were seen to be no more than two for the simple reason that every thought and emotion that the girl ever had could be co-ordinated in the unity of the one personality or the other. The final and fundamental mark, therefore, of personality is unity. If a person is truly and wholly a person, there is always behind all thought and emotion one mind, one purpose, one will, one soul, one spirit — a single, undivided self!

Here, now, are what I have called the three marks of personality — in the first place thought, in the second place feeling, and in the third place unity. These are the signs or evidences in human life which show me that a person is a person.

This brings me to the final question of all — namely, the question as to whether these marks or signs can be seen in the universe in such wise that we can believe that God is a person as you and I are persons. If the spirit of God is personal, then God will manifest himself, as we manifest ourselves, in these three ways which I have indicated. The world will show itself to be at once an expression of a planning, ordering, directing spirit of Intelligence — of a spontaneous, watchful, eager spirit of Love — and of an all-embracing, all-harmonious spirit of Unity. If we find that the marks of these things are on the universe, then we have a right to assert that God is not only spirit but personality; and we have a right to love him, to

call upon him, and pray to him, with "quietness and confidence forever."

To take the last of these three marks of personality first, I suppose that there is nobody at this late day who will deny that the universe is characterised by the mark of unity. There was a time, many centuries ago, when the world seemed to be such a chaos of confused and antagonistic forces, that men found themselves obliged to believe that there was not one mind but many minds, at the heart of things. Hence the strange and awful polytheisms which were so prevalent among ancient peoples! Then, too, there was a time when men thought that it was impossible to reconcile what seems to be the good upon the one hand with what seems to be the evil upon the other, and we find as a result those dualistic philosophies and theologies of which Zoroastrianism is the most familiar and impressive illustration. But now, of course, all such speculations as these have been rendered forevermore impossible by the discoveries and investigations of modern science. During the last three centuries or so, we have been gradually extending the borders of human knowledge. And every step which has been taken during this period of time into the realm of the unknown, has been straight in the direction of the great truth of Unity, until to-day men are ready to assert that they know, if they know anything at all, that the universe, as the very word itself clearly indicates, is a unity. Long since has it been demonstrated that all the movements

of the world, in both its organic and inorganic phases, are controlled by one supreme and universal Law, which constitutes a harmony so perfect that it is possible to think of "the music" not only "of the spheres" but of all created things. Long since has it been made known that the various forces which are active in the world about us — such as light, heat, electricity, magnetism, — are not different forces at all, but only so many different expressions of one and the same great energy, and thus that we have a single Force exactly as we have a single Law. And now, in our own time, has come the demonstration of the final truth that the matter, which constitutes the stuff or substance of the universe, is not composed of some seventy or more different atoms, as the old chemistry has always taught us, but is itself one, since we know it to be possible to transform one atom into another, exactly as we transform one force into another. Thus as a result of such achievements as these, do we find ourselves confronted to-day by one Substance, one Force, one Law. We know ourselves to be living in very word and truth, in a universe! This is the one great demonstration of modern science — the one principle or truth which finds universal acceptance by the modern mind. Those who are farthest removed from the influences of religion, and who are most bitterly opposed to all that we mean by the idea of God, are among the very first to assent to this great conception of the Unity of the World-Substance, the World-Order, and the World-Life. This, says such an atheist as Ernst Haeckel, in his *History of Creation*

and again in his *Riddle of the Universe*, is "the basic fact" of present-day knowledge — and then does he go on to describe his materialistic philosophy by the immensely significant term of "Monism"! This man, and others like him, would undoubtedly refuse to speak with Tennyson of

"One God, which ever lives and loves";

but they would not hesitate a moment to repeat his phrase

" . . . one law, one element,  
And one far-off divine event,  
To which the whole creation moves."

What is true here of the mark of unity is true also, I believe, in equal measure of the mark of Rationality, although I am well aware that opinion is by no means so unanimous upon this point as upon the other. To my mind, however, it is just as necessary to see thought behind the movements of the universe in which we live, as it is to see thought behind the movements of the mechanical chessman with whom we played our game. The so-called Argument from Design was once thought to be a perfect demonstration of the existence and activity of a Divine Mind; and even now there is much in this old-fashioned point of view which is valid and impressive. How wonderfully does James Martineau touch upon this fact in his great *Study of Religion*! "If we give to the word 'Intellect,'" he says, "its wider scope and include in it the movements of thought

which result in great works of art, who can deny that the creative genius of Nature ever transcends its intending skill? What sublimer architecture than the dome of the midnight sky! what richer picture-gallery than the sunset effects on the same landscape through a single year! what more pathetic drama than the story of human life, forever enacted on the stage of ten thousand homes! Of these . . . , all our Art is but the copy; and he is the greatest master in this field, who most patiently studies the combinations of the world, and gains the deepest insight into this language of expression. Of all that we can know, of all that we can admire, the original lies in the universe around; they are the prototypes of all intellectual relations; and how can they be Thoughts in their reflections, unless they be so in their incidence? . . . With what consistency can we do homage to the discoverer of Law, and see no wisdom in its Institution? and crown with bays the brow of a Dante or a Shakespeare for reading to us the poem of the world, yet have no reverence for the Author of its harmonies? ”

Thus has man ever seen evidence of the Divine Mind in the perfect handiwork of the creation. But to-day, as we know, this argument from design has been almost completely superseded by the new science and philosophy of evolution. The world no longer appears to us as a design, but as a growth. The simile of the watch, as John Fiske puts it, has been replaced by the simile of the flower. For a time it was believed that this new evolutionary conception made the hypothesis

of a Divine Intelligence behind the universal order absurd, and the hypothesis of a Divine Mechanism inevitable. But to-day we are beginning to see that quite the contrary is the case! What stronger evidence of a Divine Mind do we want than that which is contained in the long process of evolution? See how the inorganic has passed over into the organic, the vegetable into the animal, and the animal into the human. See with what persistence the process has gone forward from age to age, until at last the spiritual reality at the heart of it all was brought to light! What a magnificent conception is here! What a stupendous achievement do we behold! What a mark of Thought, and Plan, and Intellectual Purpose is this! What wonder that the earliest scientist and the latest philosopher in the field of evolution, while far apart on nearly every other point, are united in a common conviction that the universe is the product of a Divine Mind! Said Alfred Russel Wallace, after a lifetime of the most painstaking study of natural phenomena: "I argue that these phenomena necessarily imply first, a Creative Power, which so constituted matter as to render these marvels possible; a Directive Mind, which is demanded at every step of the process we term growth; and lastly an Ultimate Purpose in the very existence of the whole vast life-world in all its long course of evolution." And this idea is echoed by Professor Henri Bergson throughout his whole new story of evolution, which he describes as nothing more nor less than the result of the creative impulse and creative struggle of a central intelligence.



"Life," he says, "is of the psychological order. . . . Consciousness is at the origin of life"!

Here now have we found the mark of Unity and the mark of Thought, or Rationality! Now what about the third mark—that of Feeling, or Emotion, or Love?

In answering this inquiry, we come, as we have seen, to the most important element of personality—and that element, also, let me confess frankly, which it is hardest to discover in the universal order. For here we pass altogether out of the realm of intellectual speculation or demonstration, into the realm of pure experience. We cannot stand aloof and prove by logical processes that love lies at the root of things. We cannot seize upon the world and demonstrate by the laboratory method that love is there. We have got to plunge into the flood of world events, as a swimmer might plunge into a stream, and experience this Divine Love, if it is there at all, at first hand. We have got to feel it for ourselves, and know that it is there because it has entered into us and we have entered into it. We have got to follow in good earnest Bergson's method of intuition, and know the truth not by arguing about it, but by living it. And it is just here that most of us fail, for our intuitions are weak, and our experiences are shallow. We live our little lives in our obscure and narrow portions of the world. We skim over the surface of existence, never sinking to any great depths. We have our annoyances and our troubles, and now and then some heavy sorrows. And in it all we try to

find some evidence of the Divine Love, of which we have heard so much, and fail completely. Or perhaps we even go so far as to find evidence that there is a principle of cruelty or hate in the world, instead of the reported principle of love—and believing that our experience is of course infallible and final, we confidently declare that there is no such thing as love.

But why, pray, should we presume to believe that our own individual experience can settle this great problem of existence? Why should we trust our feelings in this matter, in a way and to an extent in which we never think of trusting them in any other matter? When I go into an art-gallery and find that I do not like a picture which has received the unqualified encomiums of unnumbered generations of artists and critics, I am just humble enough to believe that the men who have loved and admired the picture all these years are right, and I am wrong. When I go into a concert-hall, and hear with complete indifference a symphony which is regarded by all authorities as one of the greatest ever written, I at once assume that my indifference is a proof not that the symphony is overestimated, but that I still have something to learn about music. When I stand in the vale above Tintern Abbey, and look with unmoved heart upon the scene which stirred the soul of William Wordsworth to ecstatic rapture, I am confident not that the vale is not beautiful, but that I am so dull and stupid and inexperienced that I cannot see and feel what is really there all of the time in spite of me. The blind man can tell us nothing about the light

of the sun; the deaf man can prove nothing about the song of the skylark; the one word of Jesus about the lilies of the field outweighs centuries of silence from the dull peasants of the Palestinian plains. And so it is with my failure to find the Divine Love in and through the world of life. Over against my failure, is the unquestioned success of thousands upon thousands of men and women, who have lived more greatly, and loved more deeply, and suffered more terribly, than I. These men and women rise up and say that the world is full of love. These men and women look sorrow in the face, and still declare that life is worth the living. These men and women are beset by every disaster, and stricken by every sorrow, and destroyed by every cruelty, and still they bear glad witness to the fact that God is good.

Now here to my mind is experience that is valid, here is testimony that is unanswerable, here is revelation that is certain. Against all the denials and doubts and failures of all the little souls who have lived timidly and hoped faintly, and who from out their weakness and their fear have borne witness that they have seen no indication in the world of the Divine Love, I summon the saints and seers, the prophets and martyrs, the poets and painters, of all ages and all places, who have cried unto God out of the depths, and have received in answer the assurance of his mercy. The Psalmist is right when he says, "Like as a Father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." Jesus is incontrovertible when he declares that "God is love." Our own Whittier has summed it all up,

when he writes in the meditative moments of his old age:

“ That all the jarring notes of life  
Seem blending in a psalm,  
And all the angles of its strife  
Show rounding into calm;

“ That more and more a Providence  
Of Love is understood,  
Making the springs of time and sense  
Sweet with eternal good.”

Here, now, in the universe are Unity, and Thought, and Feeling. Here do we see one unified principle of life; here do we see thought acting upon things; here do we see “ a Providence of Love, making the springs of time and sense sweet with eternal good.” Here in the universe, in other words, are the same marks of personality that we find in and through ourselves. And here therefore is the evidence, is it not, that God is a personality as we are personalities? God is one as we are one; God thinks as we think; God loves as we love; God lives and moves and has his being just as we live and move and have our being. Therefore do I venture to conclude, by the sure processes of logic, that if we are persons, God must be a person too. I do not mean by this assertion, of course, that God is what we are, and no more. He is not only all that we are spiritually, but infinitely and eternally more besides. But so far at least as our spirits reach, we may truly say, that he is what we are. As we are persons, so he is a person. Which means that when we look upon a man,

we see a reflection of God; and when we think upon God, we see a projection of man.

And this means what, to our religion? It means everything to our religion! It means that our religious consciousness is valid; that our instinct of prayer and worship is sound; that our dependence upon the divine wisdom and love is not in vain. It means that God hears, God sees, God cares. It means that God is our Father, that we are his children, and that all the life and faith and love of millions of human hearts are justified at last.

## THE MODERN CONCEPTION OF PRAYER

It needs no very great amount of argument to point out the fact that, during the last generation or so, a great change has gradually been coming over our ideas and practices of public and private prayer. In the old days, prayer was the simplest, easiest, most natural, and most commonplace expression of religion. In its spontaneous observance on all occasions of individual and social life, it seemed to be something almost in the nature of an instinct. Men prayed as naturally and inevitably as they breathed, and sometimes, I imagine it must be confessed, with as little thought. But always in the great moments of experience, however it may have been at ordinary times, the utterance of prayer was a sincere and heartfelt expression of the soul. It was the one avenue by which religion was enabled to enter freely and fully into the daily lives of individual men and women; and the one way, also, in which religion again and again seized upon the race and moulded its destinies to abiding good or ill. Prayer, in other words, has been a real thing in the past. The great men of the world have been men of prayer, and the great movements in the evolution of humanity have been initiated and accompanied by prayer.

But all this now is wholly changed. It has long since become a truism, has it not, that men do not pray as they did formerly, and that our age is no longer,

therefore, an age of prayer. Family prayers, which were once a practically universal custom in Christian households, are now so exceptional as to be conspicuous. Many of us are trying, partly out of reverence for tradition, and partly because we trust our intuitions more than our intellectual convictions, to teach our children to pray in the old, familiar, simple way, but how many of us can truly say that we continue the practice ourselves? Now and then, to be sure, there come moments of bitter trial and sore distress, when the old instinct revives and it seems as though nothing but prayer can appease the agony of the mind or satisfy the longings of the soul — but how many of us find it easy, even on such occasions, to take the posture and speak the words of divine petition? And what is true here in our individual experience is true also in our associated life. Prayer-meetings have disappeared from many even of our most orthodox churches, and where they still survive they show every evidence of decay. We still maintain unimpaired the order of prayer in the services of public worship in our churches, but more than one right-minded person has confessed to me that he finds it “a bore”; and the hour at which most people arrive in their pews would seem to indicate that they do not regard the opening portions of the service as very important. And, in the same way, we still go through the performance of invoking the blessing of God upon our public gatherings of all descriptions. Nobody would think of such a thing, for example, as opening a political convention or a legislative session

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without the regular prayer of the duly appointed chaplain. But is it not significant of the temper of our age that the one clergyman at the Baltimore convention of 1912 who had the "good sense," as we were told, to make his prayer short, was rewarded with a burst of applause so hearty and spontaneous that it was made a subject of newspaper comment throughout the land; and that when it was moved some years ago, in the United States Senate, that the prayers of the retiring chaplain be gathered and printed in a volume for permanent record, the motion was defeated on the ground that so few of the honourable senators had ever been present to hear the prayers, it was not worth while to preserve them?

The fact of the matter is — try to disguise it as we may with our pretentious hypocrisies and our easy shams! — we are no longer taking the practice of prayer very seriously. We are finding it more and more difficult to reconcile the idea of prayer with the new scientific and philosophic knowledge of our time. Deep down in our hearts we are cherishing certain very definite doubts of the efficacy of prayer, and thus, as a natural consequence, gradually allowing its observance, both public and private, to fall into neglect. Whether we like it or not, whether it is a healthy sign or not, it would still seem to be true that the age of prayer is closed forever, and the men of prayer the heroes of an elder day.

In order to understand this remarkable change in the religious experience and habit of the race, it is nec-



essary to consider for a few moments some of the objections to prayer which have arisen in our time, and which have done more than anything else to bring about this transformation of which I have been speaking.

In the first place, we find it difficult to-day to believe that the affairs of men here upon the earth are of such large importance in the eyes of God that he has nothing more important to do than to listen to our complaints and give answer to our petitions. It was easy to believe that God was heeding our prayers when the earth was regarded as the centre of the universe, and the salvation of men's souls the central problem of cosmic history. But it is not easy to cherish this belief when we stand confronted by the vast reaches of the universe which have been unfolded before our gaze by the researches of modern science. Here are the heavenly spaces all about us, stretching out so many millions of miles in every direction that the mind of man is unable to comprehend their magnitude, and our little planet one of the smallest and least important of the unnumbered stars by which they are everywhere illumined. Consider the great ocean which rolls between this shore and the continent of Europe; imagine in the midst of that ocean a little piece of seaweed floating upon its waves; and you will have a very exaggerated idea of the importance of this earth from the standpoint of the surrounding universe. Then imagine that this seaweed is peopled by myriads of infinitesimal creatures; ask yourselves of how much impor-

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tance these little animals are from the standpoint of the world-problems with which you and I are concerned; and you will have some conception, perhaps, of how large the affairs of man must appear in the cosmic vision of God. The extent of the universe in space and time, which has been discovered and explored by the great sciences of our day, is so enormous that man has shrunk to a position of utter insignificance, and, in the face of this result, it is difficult indeed to believe that God can be very much concerned with the petty desires and aspirations of our individual lives.

In the second place, the old conception of prayer has been discredited by what we know as "the universality of natural law." We know to-day, if we know anything at all, that this vast material universe is controlled throughout by unchanging and unchangeable laws. There is no remotest corner of all the immeasurable infinities of space, and no briefest fraction of a second in all the unending eternities of time, which are subject to disorder, or even momentary interference from without, but all things, in the most distant star in the heavens as on this whirling earth, and in the earliest moment of cosmic history as at this latest moment of recorded time, are subject to the unvarying and perfect uniformity of law. When this great fact was first revealed to the world, it was believed for a time that it meant the elimination of God from the universe, and the establishment of the philosophy of atheism. Now, however, we have come to see that there is nothing essentially irreconcilable between the

thought of God and the thought of a universe which is always moving in accordance with unvarying law. On the contrary, this natural law, of which we speak, is not to be regarded as alien to God at all, but only as something which marks the uniform channels of activity into which God is directing the impulses of his creative energy. There are various ways of explaining this relationship between the life of God upon the one hand and the reign of law upon the other. John Fiske tells us that a natural law is nothing more nor less than the statement of the particular way in which God always chooses to act. When we discover the operation of some natural law, as Kepler discovered the law of planetary motion, or Newton the law of gravitation, or Spencer the law of evolution, we are simply discovering the principle to which God has decided to conform his life; and when we formulate these laws into a system and declare that this system marks the uniform procedure of natural forces, we are simply telling the way in which God "lives and moves and has his being." God can only act in one way, says Fiske, because he is not whimsical or capricious but perfectly wise, and knows therefore just what he wants to do and just how he can do it. To ask him to reverse his constant method of action in any particular case is to ask him to reverse himself, and condemn himself.

James Martineau has interpreted this fact in a somewhat different way. "The universality of law," he says, in one of the profoundest passages he ever wrote,

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“is God’s eternal act of self-limitation, or abstinence from the movements of free affection, for the sake of a constancy that shall never falter or deceive.” M. Bergson comes to identically the same conclusion, but substitutes the element of compulsion for that of free choice. God, he says, is confronted, in his creative work, by certain definite conditions of reality, and he finds it necessary to conform to these conditions. This means that natural laws are nothing but the revelation of the adaptations which the spirit of life finds it necessary to make in its struggle with dead matter. We may explain this phenomenon, therefore, in one way, or we may explain it in another, but the cosmic fact remains always the same — that the laws of this universe are changeless, for the reason that God, from choice as most of us would put it, or from compulsion as I imagine Bergson would put it, is always moving along certain precise lines and working in a certain definite way. “God is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever! . . . With him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning!”

Now it is evident, is it not, that this principle of the uniformity of divine activity, founded upon the scientific demonstration of the universality of natural law, is fatal to the old idea of prayer. In what way can a spoken prayer, for example, so change the atmospheric conditions that a period of drought can be transformed into a period of rain? How can a verbal petition even to God so alter the physical conditions of seed and soil and nourishment as to change the bar-

renness of a famine-stricken country into the full harvest of abundant crops? How is our prayer to change the laws of wind and wave in such fashion that the safety of a friend upon the seas can be assured? How can the prayers even of an entire nation achieve a victory upon the field of battle, or save a much-loved President from the consequences of an assassin's bullet? These are events which follow upon certain well-understood causes, and the sequence between cause and effect here, as everywhere else in the world of nature and of human affairs, is invariable. As well expect, by means of prayer, to swing a planet out of its appointed orbit, to bid the "mountains to be cast into the midst of the sea," or to destroy this earth and make it vanish into space, as by prayer to bring one drop of rain or one ray of sunshine from the skies, to stay the action of a raging storm, or to win a victory upon the field of battle.

Moving now from the field of science to the field of religion proper, we encounter a third difficulty in the way of the old idea of prayer. I refer to the fact that a prayer, which is devoted to instructing God as to our troubles and beseeching him for relief, would seem to imply a lack of faith in his omniscience on the one hand, and his beneficence upon the other. If we really trust in the wisdom and goodness of God, why, let me ask you, should we pray at all? Why should we not surrender ourselves absolutely to God's keeping, and rest there without petition of our own? God is wise, we say; then why should we ask him to send

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rain to end the drought, for surely he must know of its occurrence, and be permitting its continuance for reasons which we know not of, but which are satisfactory to him? God is merciful; then why should we beseech him to guard us from some impending calamity, for he surely would not wantonly compass our destruction? God, we believe, "doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men"; then why should we pray him to save our loved ones from death upon the seas, for "surely he knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are dust"? It is perfectly evident, is it not, that the old idea of prayer is inconsistent with our professed trust in the power and the goodness of God. Petitions that he will do this or will not do that, show only that our faith in him is not as absolute as we would fain believe.

As a fourth objection to prayer, I would refer to the very practical difficulty that God could not answer prayer, even if he desired to do so, owing to the confusion of human wishes. Here are millions of men upon this planet, of different races and nationalities, of various habits and tastes and inclinations, with diversified interests and ambitions, oftentimes diametrically opposed in their hopes and aspirations, and yet all of them praying that God will do as they desire. The farmer wants rain for his crops, and the picnic party wants fair skies and warm sunshine. The schooner beating up the coast wants a wind from the southwest, and the schooner sailing down the coast a wind from the northeast. The Frenchman wants vic-

tory to rest upon the tricolour, and the German upon the Prussian eagle. Which prayer shall God answer; how shall he choose; to whom shall he give his favour? Was not Lincoln right when he pointed out in his Second Inaugural Address, "Both North and South pray to the same God, and each invokes his aid against the other. . . . The prayers of both could not be answered"?

Lastly, passing from the realm of theory to the realm of fact, there is that difficulty which has assailed so many devout and trusting hearts — namely, that if God heeds the prayers we speak, why does he not answer them more often? Many a believer who knows nothing of the speculative objections which we have been considering, has been led unwillingly from faith to doubt by the hard, cold fact that few prayers are ever really answered. We hear, every now and then, of wonderful things that have been accomplished by prayer; but very seldom do we hear of the things which prayer has failed to accomplish. And yet I venture to assert that for every one prayer which has seemed to be answered, there have been thousands and tens of thousands of prayers which have manifestly not been answered. Think of how this entire nation united in one great prayer that the life of President McKinley might be spared, and then recall how that prayer was left unanswered! Think of the agonising prayers which must have mounted heavenward from the deck of the *Titanic* as she slowly sank her great hulk beneath the icy waters of the Atlantic

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— and yet no answer! Think of the prayers that were spoken by a million sufferers in the flood-stricken regions of Indiana and Ohio some years ago — and yet nothing done to stay the mad progress of the waters! If God can answer prayer, then why, in the name of all that is merciful, did he turn a deaf ear to such pitiful entreaties as these? We do not need to theorise about this problem. In spite of occasional coincidences and marvels, we all of us know, as a plain matter of fact, that prayers are not answered; and this, I doubt not, has done more than everything else put together to discredit the idea, and end the practice, of public and private prayer.

These are the main objections which are being offered to-day to the idea of prayer, and which are standing in the way of the continued practice of prayer. And what is to be said as to the validity of these objections?

In the first place, it must have impressed us all that every one of these objections to prayer is based upon a very definite and particular interpretation of the meaning of prayer. Behind all of these difficulties which I have named are the ideas that God, in his relation to the universe, is a great ruler or king, who, like an earthly sovereign, can do anything that he pleases within the borders of his dominions — that it is the business of men, if they want anything to come to pass in their own individual lives or in the world at large, to tell God what they want and try to persuade him to grant it — and that prayer is only the practical me-



dium for conveying this information and persuasion to the ears of God. Prayer, in other words, from the point of view of these objections alleged against it, is nothing more nor less than a petition addressed to God for the bestowal of earthly favours. It is a request upon the part of man that God relieve him of some evil, or reward him with some blessing — that God change the order of physical phenomena or interfere with the progress of human events, at some particular time, or in some particular place, for his own personal benefit. Nor is this an unfair or inaccurate interpretation, for certainly we must all of us admit that this is what the ordinary man in all ages has understood by prayer, and that this is the kind of prayer which has generally been offered in the past, and is still being offered to-day.

Man has always had an unalterable conviction that, if he wanted anything especial in this world, he would surely get it if he only prayed long enough and hard enough to God; and therefore have prayers, in the past, been one long succession of petitions for certain changes for the better in man's physical condition, in the material and social environment in which he has been living, and in the issue of the human events in which he has been involved. Thus men, as we have seen, have prayed for rain in a period of prolonged drought, for food in a time of famine, for safety in the hour of urgent danger. They have prayed that the sick might be made well, that those upon the sea, or in perilous places of storm and flood, might be protected from disaster, that

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victory might come upon the field of battle in time of war. Nor have prayers of this kind wholly ceased, even in this age of spiritual indifference. Only a few years ago, at a time of serious drought in Kansas, the governor issued a proclamation, asking the ministers of the state to unite on a certain Sunday in prayer to God for rain. I have myself heard a minister pray during a great famine in India, that God would bring food to the hordes of that starving country, even as he sent the ravens to feed Elijah in the desert. At this very moment, in all the Christian churches of England, France, Russia and Italy, are prayers being spoken for the success of the allied armies in their struggle against the legions of the Central Empires.

That God will interfere in some way with the course of natural or human events for the benefit of man, has been the burden of all the prayers of all the ages past. Thus it was that when Prof. John Tyndall, in 1872, wished to assail the validity of prayer, and show his contempt for its observance, he offered his famous "test"—that two exactly similar wards of a hospital be filled respectively with an equal number of patients, afflicted with the same diseases, and, so far as possible, in the same general condition of depression or convalescence; that the one ward be placed in the hands of clergymen, and the patients treated by nothing but the prayers of these men for their recovery, and the other ward removed from all religious influences, and the patients treated by the best skill and knowledge of

trained physicians; and that a careful record be kept, for purposes of comparison, of the deaths and recoveries in each ward. This is what prayer meant to Prof. Tyndall, and this was the way, to his mind, to prove that it was nothing but a superstition.

Now it is against this particular conception of prayer as a petition addressed to God for interference with the orderly processes of natural phenomena, that these objections, which I have been discussing, are all of them directed. And I believe that we must admit, in all frankness, that, from this point of view at least, these objections are every one of them unanswerable. It is the very general recognition of this fact, which accounts for the sweeping changes which have come in our habit of prayer during the last two generations. We are convinced to-day that prayer, such as has been practised for unnumbered centuries in the past, is literally of no avail. Tyndall was right when he challenged the church with his "prayer-test," and the church showed that it did not believe its own professions when it declined to pick up the gauntlet. We see clearly enough to-day, if we never saw it before, that there is only one kind of prayer that can effect anything in the physical world, and that is the prayer not of words but of deeds. The only prayer that can save a barren land from famine is the digging of irrigation canals. The only prayer that can save a storm-tossed ship upon the seas is the vigilance of the captain upon the bridge and the discipline of the crew upon the decks. The only prayer that can persuade God to

bring victory upon the field of battle is the genius of the general in command and the perfect valour of the soldier in the ranks. Cromwell knew what he was doing when he commanded his soldiers not only to pray but to keep their powder dry. Bayard Taylor was right when he said that "labour is the truest prayer." Emerson was only anticipating our most extreme modern thought upon this question, when he said, in his essay upon "Self-Reliance," "As soon as a man is at one with God he will not beg. He will then see prayer in action. The prayer of the farmer kneeling in his field to weed it, the prayer of the rower kneeling with the stroke of the oar, are true prayers heard throughout nature." This whole transformation which has recently come over our conception of prayer, under the influence of such considerations as I have just been discussing, is beautifully illustrated by the familiar story of the little girl and boy who were in great fear of being late to school. "Oh, let's stop," said the girl, as they ran along, "and pray God to get us to school in time." "No," said the boy, a true son of his generation, "let's run as fast as we can, and pray while we're running."

From all this the conclusion would seem to be inevitable, would it not, that the practice of prayer is forevermore impossible for all intelligent and right-minded persons. It would seem that the change which has come over our individual and social practices in regard to prayer, during the last few years, is wholly beneficent, and that it is earnestly to be desired that we shall

soon have the courage to eliminate the custom of prayer from our public services of worship as completely as we have already eliminated it from our private houses. This is certainly the case if prayer is to be understood as meaning only what Prof. Tyndall understood it to mean when he proposed his famous "prayer-test" to the English people.

But let me say right here, without any further postponement of the issue toward which I have been moving all this while, that I for one have very serious doubts if this idea of prayer as a petition to God to do something for man in the outward material world is all that is contained in this great phenomenon of religious experience — or, indeed, is properly contained therein at all! This is the idea, to be sure, which has been dominant in the minds of men ever since the first savage lifted his hands in prayer to God for vengeance upon his enemies or protection from the tempest. This is the idea which has found expression in the public and private prayers of unnumbered generations of men, as any reading of human history will clearly show. Prof. Tyndall was undoubtedly reflecting the idea of his own and every other age, when he saw in this religious practice nothing but a method for the healing of disease. But we find ourselves shaken just a bit in this connection, it seems to me, when we turn from the superstitions of the multitudes and the traditions of the church, and mount into the serene and lofty atmosphere of the great prophetic souls of the eras gone.

I examine in my library some of "the prayers of the

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ages," as we might call them — the prayers which are recorded from the lips of men like Buddha and Socrates and Jesus, Augustine and St. Bernard and St. Francis of Assisi, John Fox and John Wesley, Bishop Butler, Cardinal Newman, and Theodore Parker — men of all ages, all variations of belief, and all diversities of religious custom. Many of these prayers are expressed in the crude and superstitious language of the days in which they were spoken; and all of them fall again and again into the ignoble attitude of petition which we have been discrediting. And yet the impressive fact remains that the predominating spirit of these utterances is something wholly different from anything that we have thus far considered. If we mean by prayer nothing more than a request to God for the stilling of a storm or the winning of a battle, then the utterances of these great souls are not prayers. But if, on the other hand, these utterances must be regarded as prayers in the real sense of the word, then the idea of prayer is something infinitely more sublime, more tender, and more august than anything we have yet described. And I believe that this latter is the true horn of the dilemma! I believe that we have been dealing with a conception of prayer, which, however familiar or universal, is altogether inadequate. I believe that the objections which we have very properly levelled against this conception have been objections not to prayer in itself, but to a false idea of prayer which has unfortunately found lodgment within the human mind. I believe that prayer, when rightly understood and

practised, is the noblest act of which a human being is capable, and is something absolutely essential to the purity and integrity of the soul. And I believe that it is the task of our age, not to get away from the idea and practice of prayer altogether, because a false conception of its observance has been impressed upon our attention, but to get back to that true spirit of prayer, which is reflected in the utterances of all the great souls of the centuries gone by, and then yield ourselves to this spirit "in spirit and in truth"!

And what is this true spirit of prayer, of which I am speaking? We may perhaps get at what we are after most readily by a process of analogy.

Here, we will say, is a man who has a passion for beauty, and desires to give outward expression to his passion by becoming a painter. What, now, does he do? He becomes a student of art; for the prosecution of his studies, he betakes himself to the great galleries of the world, where are gathered those paintings which have most nearly approximated to the artistic ideal; and there he gives himself to the meditation and study of their greatness. For days and weeks together he yields himself to the creations of Raphael, Michael-Angelo, Da Vinci, Titian, his mind absorbing the wonders of their beauty, his soul suffused with the marvels of their perfection. And gradually his soul begins to grow; he begins to climb up, step by step, toward the heights on which these great artists lived, until at last he begins to see the visions which they saw, to comprehend the ideals of beauty which they expressed, and

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finally to be able to set forth, more or less imperfectly, these visions and ideals for himself. By the constant contemplation, that is, of the great paintings of the world the student of art finds himself gaining such insight and consecration, that in time he is himself equipped for the creation of similar works of beauty. Witness how, as a young man, Burne-Jones worshipped at the shrine of Rossetti, studied the master's canvases by day and dreamed of them by night, until his soul had itself mounted to the heights and gained the power and the vision that it sought.

Again, here is a young man whose soul yearns to express itself in music. He also becomes a student and makes it his business to seek out the great musicians of the past and of the present, to study their symphonies and oratorios and operas, to attend concerts where his soul may be lifted up by the power of great orchestras and choruses, and thus at last, like Elijah of old, to be transported, as by a chariot of fire, into the heaven of his desires. Little by little, through such a process as this, he begins to understand and to feel, and, best of all, to find power for himself to pour forth his soul in the divine melody of song. The spirit of music, in other words, through much meditation and communion, is conjured at last to enter into his life, as the spirit of art was made to enter into the life of the painter, and there give inspiration to his labours. Witness, for example, how Richard Wagner worshipped at the shrine of Beethoven, through many a year of eager longing and patient hope, until



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Just the master's soul became as his own, and he himself the master of a later day.

Now here, in exactly the same way, are men and women who are striving, some eagerly and some indifferently, to understand the secret of spiritual life, by which I mean the life of "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, meekness, faith, temperance." Students of life as the others are students of art and of music, they look abroad over the world in which they are living, and they find that every minutest particle of this world is tingling with that divine spirit of life which we call God. Here, they know, in this eternal, infinite, and loving spirit, "in which [they] live and move and have [their] being," is the ideal life of the universe, and therefore the ideal life of man; and it is the secret of this life which they are yearning to gain for the upbuilding of their souls and the perfecting of their lives. And how shall they possess themselves of this spirit of ideal life if not by following the example of the artist in his quest of beauty and the musician in his quest of song? Just as the student of art gains his power to paint his canvases by long and patient communion with the spirit of beauty, as this spirit has become incarnate and thus revealed in the supreme artistic geniuses of the world — just as the student of music finds his ability to pour forth his soul in immortal harmonies by patient meditation upon the spirit of great music, as this spirit has become incarnate and thus revealed in the great masters of the ages past — so also may we be able, to some extent, to

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realise and fulfil the divine life by meditating upon the deep and high things of the spirit as these are revealed first, perhaps, in the great and pure souls of history, but ultimately, of course, in nothing short of the being of Almighty God. As the artist communes with perfect beauty, and so is himself able to paint — as the musician communes with perfect song, and so is himself able to sing — so also may we commune with perfect truth, perfect justice, perfect love, and so ourselves be able to live! And what is this meditation, this communion, of which I speak, but prayer — just such prayer as you and I offer up in our churches and sometimes in our homes — just such prayer as the great prophets of humanity have ever offered to their God?

What have we been doing in our prayers but sitting like the student of art, in rapt contemplation before the picture of God, as our Father who is in heaven, and having our souls, like the soul of the artist, charged with the supreme beauty and sublimity of this conception? What have we been doing in our prayers but sitting like the student of music, listening to the divine melody of the voice of God, and having our lives transfigured by the ravishing and inspiring wonder of it all? What is any prayer but the losing of ourselves, as students of life, in the thought of God, as the student of art loses himself in the thought of beauty or the student of music in the thought of song? What is any prayer, spoken in public or in private, in the church or in the closet, “uttered or unexpressed,” but our feeble,

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ag human way of meditating upon God, communion with God, surrendering to God, trying as best we can to see and hear and know God, and thus transform our souls into the likeness of his spirit?

Prayer is meditation, communion, self-surrender. It is "the soul's sincere desire" to be like God. It is the meeting of spirit with spirit — the spirit of man with that spirit of God which is "nearer [to us] than breathing, closer than hands and feet." Emerson has given us the final definition and justification of prayer, in his famous saying, that "Prayer is looking at life from the highest point of view." When we pray we consciously withdraw ourselves for a moment from the world, that we may go to a high place, as Jesus went on to the Mount of Transfiguration, and look at life from this viewpoint — the viewpoint not of time but of eternity, not of earth but of heaven, not of matter but of spirit, not of man but of God. "Prayer," I repeat, "is looking at life from the highest point of view" — it is the attitude of reverence before, and surrender to, all that is better and higher than ourselves. It is thinking on "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report." "Think on these things," said St. Paul — in other words, *pray* — and behold the God of Peace shall be with you!

Here is what I regard as the true conception of prayer — certainly that conception which has been understood and expressed by the great prophetic souls

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of the past. And notice now, if you will, how directly opposed is this conception to that more familiar idea of prayer against which we found so many serious objections. Prayer, as it is still understood, unfortunately, by the overwhelming majority of men throughout the world, is nothing more nor less, as we have seen, than a petition addressed to God for some transformation of the orderly process of nature, some interruption in the unvarying sequence of cause and effect, some interference with the natural course of human events, which will redound to the benefit of the person who is praying. Prayer, as commonly practised both in the past and in the present, has concerned itself exclusively with such phenomena as rainfalls, storms, cataclysms, sickness and disease, the issues of battle, the fall of dynasties and kingdoms,—things “of the earth earthy.” It has been our persistent and insistent request for changes in the physical and social world — or, as we would express it in theological terms, for a change in the mind or the will of God.

Now all this is completely reversed by this new conception of prayer, which I have just been trying to interpret. A prayer, from the new point of view, is an effort not to change God, but to change ourselves. It is an endeavour not to adapt the mind of God to our selfish ambitions and trivial desires, but to adapt our minds to the august will of the Most High. It is an attempt not to persuade God to reduce the universe to the measure of our existence, but to persuade our souls to be enlarged to the measure of the divine pur-

pose. We pray not in order that we may "reconcile the ways of God to man," as Alexander Pope put it, but, on the contrary, that we may reconcile man to the unchanging ways of God. Prayer, when truly understood and practised, is concerned not with the physical but with the spiritual world; it seeks a change not in the outer but in the inner realm; it is directed not at the mind of God but at the heart of man! When George Washington knelt in the snows of Valley Forge and lifted up his soul to God, he prayed not in order that he might persuade God to bring victory to his arms, but in order that, by his contemplation of the divine presence and his surrender to the divine purposes, his faltering soul might be transformed from weakness to strength. When Socrates offered up his prayer to the gods of Athens, under the shadow of the famous plane-tree on the banks of the Ilissus River, he prayed not because he thought he could persuade the deities to alter their will toward him, but rather because he knew that the very fact of his meditation upon the divine wisdom and his acceptance of the divine will would give him courage to meet the fate which was impending. When Benjamin Franklin, rationalist and scholar, arose at the opening session of the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia, and solemnly moved that the deliberations of each day be opened with prayer to God for his blessing and his guidance, he was not thinking that such prayer would persuade God to interfere in any personal way with the destinies of the new republic, but he was most cer-

tainly thinking that such prayers would remind the assembled statesmen that God lived, and that they must seek, in his name and for his sake, to find the true and do the right. Here do we have true prayer — the prayer that has been offered by all the great souls in all the great moments of experience. And the prayer, let me point out, that never goes unanswered! For always “does the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him.”

The whole contrast between the old and the new, the false and the true, is given to us in impressive form in the famous scene in the Garden of Gethsemane. Here, in the moment of his awful agony, as you will remember, the Nazarene offered up two prayers to God. The first was the prayer of his weakness and fear; and the second, the prayer of his strength and faith. In the one he prayed that the cup might pass from him — that God, in other words, would interfere in some way with the dreadful doom which seemed to be awaiting him, and enable him to escape from the hands of his enemies — just the kind of prayer against which we have been objecting so strenuously. This attitude, however, lasted but for a moment. Almost at once did he free himself from the terror which was threatening to overwhelm him, and rising to those sublime heights with which his soul was so familiar, he breathed forth that prayer which stands, I believe, as the noblest and truest which ever fell from human lips. “Nevertheless,” he said, conquering his momentary weakness, “not as I will, but as thou wilt.” The surrender of

man to God — the plea not to change God's will, but to do God's will — this is prayer! As Tennyson puts it:

“ Our wills are ours, we know not how,  
Our wills are ours to make them thine.”

Here, now, is the true conception of prayer — the prayer which moves in the realm of things spiritual and not physical, and works its changes in the soul of man and not in the mind of God! And here in this conception of prayer, which is so complete a reversal of the popular idea, do we find at once the solution of all the difficulties of which I spoke at the beginning of my address, and thus the justification of prayer as the natural, spontaneous, and indeed inevitable expression of the soul's life. So complete is this justification of prayer, that it seems to explain and to redeem even the crudest and most childish of human petitions unto God. The prayer for rain can bring no rain, but by calling to men's minds the thought of an all-wise God, it can reconcile them to enduring the drought with patience. The prayer on shipboard, as the vessel reels and shivers beneath the blast of the storm, cannot still the hurricane nor quiet the waters, but it can still the fear and quiet the anguish which are surging within the hearts of the terror-stricken passengers, by lifting their souls to the contemplation of the peace of God's over-brooding spirit. The prayer on the eve of battle can insure no victory on to-morrow's field, but it may stir the hearts of the soldiers with such devotion to the God of battles, that nothing can withstand the violence of their

## **SOCIAL APPLICATIONS**





## THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD

THE subject, the "Church and the World," is one which would seem to be about as general in character as any that I could bring to your attention. It is not my purpose, however, to discuss this subject in any abstract way. On the contrary, it is my desire to speak as directly as I know how to do — to make this address to be not a statement of theory, but a confession of personal faith.

I want to state what I think of the church as a human institution, how I interpret the place of the church in the great world of human affairs, what I feel is the duty of the church and of its ministry in relation to the stupendous problems of social idealism which press so heavily upon us in this age. Again and again, people ask me why I am so "extreme" in my views on these problems. They wonder why I expose myself to the ridicule and abuse which always fall upon men who take the fanatical attitude, as they call it, toward the questions of the day. They plead with me to recognise the facts of life, to adapt my ideas and ideals to the possibilities inherent in these facts, and thus to achieve the saving reputation of common-sense. To all such inquiries and appeals I want this address to be an answer. I speak of the general problem of the "Church and the World," only as a means of speaking of the specific and personal

problem of my professional life. I am giving here my *confessio fidei*; and it is my hope, when you have noted its articles, that you will know, even if you cannot accept, the principles which have long determined, and I pray may ever determine, my conduct as a minister of religion.

If we turn to the history of the Christian church, from the standpoint of the general problem of its relation to the outer world of practical affairs, we shall find that its attitude has been determined by one or the other of two great theories or doctrines of ecclesiastical life. These theories have never been clearly differentiated from one another—they intermingle in nearly every period of church history. Indeed, the story of the church might be not inaccurately interpreted as the story of a perpetual grapple and conflict between these two conceptions. But for my purpose in this address they can be separated, and each described in terms of sharp distinction from the other.

On the one hand, as it is hardly necessary for me to point out, the church has been guided by the idea that it must be separated from the world—must be as far removed as possible from the affairs of men. This is the idea that prevailed in the early years of Christian history, and very largely explains the refusal of the apostles and their successors to identify themselves in any way with the contemporary life of the Roman Empire. When these early Christians fled to abandoned fields outside the city walls, took refuge in humble homes on inconspicuous streets, even

buried themselves in the dark corridors of the catacombs, to hold their meetings, they were undoubtedly seeking to escape the pains of persecution; but these acts may well be taken also as symbolical of the determination of the followers of Christ to cut themselves off as far as possible from all connection with the followers of Cæsar. This idea of separation or remoteness was also dominant in the Middle Ages, and of course explains the innumerable convents and monasteries, each one of them a "refuge" from the world, which came in time to stand as the most distinctive institutions of mediæval life. And even in our own day we still find this idea present in the world of Christendom, as witness the orders and fraternities and sisterhoods which are so interesting and, I may add, impressive a feature of the modern so-called "high-church" type of Christianity. In all these phases of religious life, we have the same basic conception of the church, and of the relation of the church to the political, social and economic environment. The church is to be regarded as a thing apart — an institution separated utterly from the world. It is a shrine — a sacred spot not to be known of those who walk the familiar ways of daily life — a "holy of holies" to be seen only by steadfast souls who have abandoned the world and entered, as if by anticipation, into the very courts of heaven.

If we examine, now, into the origin of this doctrine of the church's relation, or lack of relation, to the world, we shall find that it is a reflection

of two very distinct theological ideas. In the first place, there is what we know as the "other-world" conception of the universe. According to this idea, this present world is only a temporary abiding-place, full of temptations and miseries, doomed inevitably to more or less speedy destruction. In the early days of Christianity, it was believed that this hour of destruction was near at hand—"within the life-time of those now living," it was said. With the passing of one generation after another, however, and the ever-recurring postponement of the anticipated last day, it came to be believed that this cataclysmic hour was destined to be far removed into the future. But at the heart of both conceptions was the belief that this present world is a temporary and therefore insignificant affair. The real world, the true life, the Kingdom of God, is over there, beyond the grave. This world is at the best a portal to this next world, at the worst a barrier against it. To overcome this world, this is the great desideratum! To escape from this world, as Bunyan's pilgrim, Christian, escaped from the City of Destruction, this is "a consummation devoutly to be wished." Such an achievement, however, is not possible until God has bestowed upon us the boon of death. Therefore do we have the church—an ark amid the storm, a refuge from oppression, a "shadow of a great rock in a weary land." For ages has the church commended itself as this way of escape from the ills of life. And of course, by very virtue of this function, has

the church found it necessary to keep remote from the affairs of life — to cut itself off from all connection with the world of common things. It is with the church as with the life-boats of an ocean liner, to use a familiar but vivid illustration. The steamship, mortally wounded by collision with an iceberg, we will say, is on the point of foundering. Whether she will sink in ten minutes or in ten hours, nobody can tell. But that she is doomed to destruction, is evident; and it is equally evident that those who desire to be saved must take to the life-boats. And it is the one condition of the salvation of these life-boats, that they shall be cut loose from the stricken liner. Out upon the sea they must go, to await the arrival of the rescue ship, or to make their slow and painful way to the nearest shore. So with the church, or the churches! They are the life-boats, and the world the sinking vessel. To cut loose and to stay apart, is the one imperative necessity for these boats if their precious freight is not to be lost. Hence the remote or separated church, of which the hermit's cell in the desert, or the monastery walls in the forest glade or on the mountain-side, is the perfect symbol.

But there is a second idea which has led to this separation of the church from the world. I refer to the idea that the world is not only transient but wicked, and that the servants of God must avoid contact with it in order to keep their hands clean and their hearts pure. The desire to enter heaven by anticipation, so to speak, and thus be saved, has been the

compelling motive, I have no doubt, with thousands and tens of thousands who have fled to the sanctuaries of prayer and praise. But quite as common has been the desire to avoid sin and the temptations that lead to sin. Here is the world, a wicked place wherein one may survive, to say nothing of prospering, only by compromises, evasions, out-and-out wrong-doing. Here, on the other hand, is an artificial community, established quite apart from the community of the world, wherein temptations and therefore the occasions of error are altogether eliminated. Here is a place where all our problems are solved, our difficulties removed, our sins forgiven. Here is a place where we can live as we would choose to live, as "heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ." It is obvious, of course, that such a place can be maintained thus sacrosanct, only by rigidly excluding from its borders all the contaminating influences of the outside world. It must banish the world, shut it out altogether, keep itself apart from the ways and deeds of men. But such a sacrifice of vital connection with practical affairs is worth making, if only for the sake of this purity of life which is achieved. Hence the remoteness of the church from the world, of which I have been speaking. The early Christian, worshipping in his grotto or catacomb, refusing to pay taxes, to engage in the ordinary social and political life of the empire, even to enlist in the army which was fighting on the frontiers for the protection of the realm against barbarian invasion, is a perfect em-

bodiment of this conception of remoteness for the sake of purity of life. Still more extreme is the Egyptian hermit, walling himself up in his lonely cell, so that he may not touch even so much as the little finger of the passer-by who gives him food or alms. In every case do we have a church keeping its devotees apart, that they may live not according to the customs and laws of men, but according to the will of God alone!

It is for these two reasons, in the main, that the church has at various times and in many places withdrawn from the world and maintained itself remote, or isolated, from the everyday affairs of human kind. The consequences of this policy have been both good and bad. On the one hand, there can be no question that this attitude of aloofness from the world has resulted in an elevation of sentiment, a purity of idealism, and a thoroughgoing consistency of principle, on the part of the church, which have seldom if ever been attained when the church and the world have been more closely inter-related. You may search the history of Christendom in vain for a clearer witness to the truth and a nobler devotion to the right, for example, than were manifest in the days of Roman martyrdom, and in certain periods, both early and late, of the unworldly Middle Ages. On the other hand, however, it is certain that there was evil in this withdrawal of the church from the world, and that this evil on the whole much more than counter-balanced any good which was involved. What are



we to say, for example, of that notorious double standard of morals, by which a man determined his conduct inside the church by one code of ethics and his conduct outside the church by another and quite different code of ethics, or by which a priest was permitted to do as a citizen in the community what he never would have been permitted to do as an officer of the church? It is doubtful if any development of Christianity has been more corruptive, and therefore disastrous, than this. We see its disease-like ravages all through the period of the Dark Ages; and it is a phenomenon which still survives as the besetting plague of the sincerity and power of the Christian life. Praising God on Sunday and worshipping at the throne of Mammon on Monday, giving charity to the poor through church collections and robbing the poor through low wages and high prices, forgiving your enemies in the cathedral and putting them to the sword on the field of battle — this it is which is the occasion of laughter to the unbelievers which are on earth and of tears to the angels which are in heaven. But that it is bound to follow upon any attempt for any reason to sever the church from the world, to divide the area of human experience into two parts, the sacred and the profane, is as inevitable as that the night shall follow upon the day. Never until men are made to see that the church and the world are one, will they be persuaded to apply to their life among their fellows those exalted standards of duty which we inevitably identify with the will of

God. When we have the church humanised by the world, and the world spiritualised by the church, then we shall have that union of the law of God and the laws of men which will eliminate all double standards of conduct, and give to us that redeemed society which will be God's kingdom established upon earth.

More serious, however, than this or any other particular evil which has followed upon the separation of the church and the world, is the spectacle of the abandonment of the world to its unhappy fate by a church absorbed in the selfish aims of its own security and honour. Here is society, with its injustice, its corruption, its poverty, its diseases, its "wars and rumours of wars." Here are the multitudes of men and women subsisting as best they can in ignorance and sin. Here are all the want and misery and death which go to make up the sum total of human suffering. And here, on the other hand, is a church which deserts the world as Bunyan's pilgrim deserted his wife and family—a church which flees the presence of those who need so sorely a physician, as the frivolous story-tellers of Boccaccio's *Decameron* fled the plague-ridden streets of mediæval Florence. The church is beautiful, to be sure, but what means this beauty, when outside its walls is ugliness triumphant? The "courts of the Lord" are full of peace, but of what avail when the ways of men are full of contention and bloodshed? Here within the sanctuary are praises and prayers and long sweet hours of meditation, but what are these but blasphemies when

without the sacred places men kill their fellows, women sell their bodies for a price, and children lift their voices in vain for bread? If there is one enormity upon which the religious prophets of all ages have heaped with one voice and one heart their unceasing, unsparing, uncompromising denunciations, it is this enormity of an isolated church, indifferent to, or at least apart from, the sufferings of men and the evils of society.

It is this which kindled the lips of so ancient a prophet as Isaiah, when he denounced "the multitude of the sacrifices" of Israel, "the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts . . . . the vain oblations . . . . the appointed feasts," and called upon the worshippers of God to "cease to do evil, learn to do well, seek justice, relieve the oppressed." It is this which kindles the lips of so modern a prophet as Rabindranath Tagore, when he bids his people to "leave this chanting and singing and telling of beads," asks whom they are worshipping "in this lonely dark corner of a temple with doors all shut," and reminds them that God "is where the tiller is tilling the soil and the pathmaker is breaking stones . . . he is with them in sun and shower and his garment is covered with dust." It is this which moved our own prophet, Edward Carpenter, when he looked upon York Minster "solid and ghostly in the pale winter morning . . . . all desolate, vast and desolate . . . . the murmurs of the outer world fainting along the roof like the murmur of the sea in some vast sea-shell," and then looked

“without, (where) the people are dying of cold and starvation.” And this it is which was in the infinitely compassionate heart of the Master when he rebuked the Pharisees for giving tithes of “mint and anise and cummin” and neglecting “the weightier matters of the law, justice, mercy and faith.” A thousand prophets and ten thousand burning speeches of these prophets, might be cited in denunciation of a church which seeks to save itself by abandoning the world, and the word of all would be to the same effect — “If thou art offering thy gift at the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.”

It is this persistent preaching of the true prophets, in pity of an abandoned world, which has stirred the church from its isolation, and slowly but surely brought it back into touch with humanity. Certainly it is this prophetic doctrine of applied religion which I had in mind, at the opening of this address, as the second of the two great theories or doctrines of ecclesiastical life which have determined the attitude of the church in relation to the outer world. Just as the theory of separation has taken the church away from the world at various times and places, so also has the theory of identity, or co-operation, brought the church back into touch with human things. And never, I believe, at any previous period of Christian history, has the church been brought so near to social facts — become so thoroughly “socialised,” as we like to phrase it — as it

has to-day. At the present time, the justification of religion to the modern mind is very largely sociological, and not theological. The significance of religion is described to-day almost exclusively in terms of service, and not of doctrine. Not those who "cry Lord, Lord," but those who seek "to do the will of (the) Father which is in heaven," are in our own age alone accepted as the genuine disciples of the Master. The church, isolated from the world in the early and Middle Ages, for the reasons which I have stated, has now been brought back into the world — and this with such thoroughness of method and enthusiasm of spirit, that it is altogether probable that the breaking of this union by divorce will never again be allowed to take place!

That the change from a church separated from the world to a church united with the world, on the basis of religion applied, is a great achievement, productive of incalculable good to both the church and the world, nobody would think for a moment of denying. That this good, however, is unmingled with evil, may well be doubted. Certainly one unfortunate consequence of this restoration of the church to the world, unforeseen, so far as I know, by any of the great prophets of the past, is becoming more and more evident in our time, and constitutes to my mind one of the most disturbing factors in the development of the modern church. I refer to the fact that the church, in coming back into the world, in order to save the world from its miseries and sins, is slowly and unconsciously being



made over into the likeness of the world. The church is being dragged down by the world to its own level of degradation, wickedness and hypocrisy, instead of the world being "lifted up" by the church to new levels of honest thought and noble feeling. The world, in other words, is bringing corruption to the church, instead of the church bringing salvation to the world.

In the early days of Christian history, when the church and its members were far removed from the social realities of the time, Christianity was characterised by certain unalterable standards of individual conduct, certain august ideals of social life, certain dreams and visions and spiritual laws, which were inherent in the very idea of God and the very example of Jesus Christ. These standards and ideals, these dreams and visions and laws, from the standpoint of the world, were impracticable and therefore foolish. Any attempt to apply them to the problems of human existence was impossible. Therefore the world not only would not adopt them, but refused even to pay attention or reverence to them. And it is just because the early church regarded these divine principles as dearer than its own life, and its own mission as the bearing witness to these principles, undiminished and untarnished, at any cost, that it tended to draw one side from the main currents of existence, hide within its shell, so to speak, and wait until the world was ready to receive its whole gospel. Now, with its return to the world, the church finds

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its principles as impracticable, as fantastically idealistic, as ever. But, believing that it must identify itself with the world, must apply these principles if it is to justify its existence at all, it forthwith proceeds not to lead the world, or drag the world, up to the sublime elevation of its own idealism, but to make over this idealism, to compromise it, qualify it, minimise it, so that it may come into reasonable touch with the world, and thus meet it on its own terms. It is this which has resulted in the spectacle which has long disgraced the pages of church history, and is still before us at the present moment, of a church which, in all branches of its denominational life, is ready for nothing more quickly and surely than an opportunity to dilute its gospel, to lower its standards, to make its ideals practical by eliminating their specifically idealistic features and thus making them unrecognisable as ideals. "I have learned to be all things to all men," said St. Paul, with quite another motive in view than that which we are now considering. And it is just this lesson of being "all things to all men," in the bad sense of the phrase, which the church has learned with a vengeance, to its own indescribable humiliation! What compromise of individual ethics has been too shameless to receive the apology, if not the sanction, of the church? What practice of social life has been too cruel to escape the blessing of God's house? What law or custom or institution of politics and industry has been too oppressive to be unworthy of the support of the ministers of Jesus Christ? Every

sin has at one time or another had its priestly apologetic, every abomination its ecclesiastical benediction. And all because the church has sought, and seeks to-day, to be practical, to get results, to meet the world where it thinks it can lead the world. With the result that it has forfeited its leadership, cast away its authority, sullied its purity, and — sorrow's crown of sorrow! — has achieved as a matter of fact, no more results than the church of an older day, which refused to trail its garments in the mire.

The church in this age, as in the past ages, just because of its compromises, its surrenders, its practicalities, is very largely a "kept church," an institution "bought and paid for," with no other mission in life than that of serving the pleasure and defending the interests of those who seek favours for a price. Bernard Shaw is an accurate reporter of the situation in his biting paragraphs on the church and the world in his "Preface" to *Major Barbara*. "Churches are suffered to exist," he writes, "only on condition that they preach submission to the state as at present capitalistically organised. The Church of England itself is compelled to add to the thirty-six articles in which it formulates its religious tenets, three more in which it apologetically protests that the moment any of these articles comes in conflict with the state (*i. e.*, the world), it is to be entirely renounced, abjured, violated, abrogated and abhorred, the policeman being a much more important person than any of the Persons of the Trinity. And this is why no tolerated church . . . can



ever win the entire confidence of the poor. It must be on the side of the police and the military, no matter what it believes or disbelieves; and as the police and the military are instruments by which the rich rob and oppress the poor, . . . it is not possible to be on the side of the poor and of the police at the same time. Indeed, the religious bodies, as the almoners of the rich, become a sort of auxiliary police, taking off the insurrectionary edge of poverty with coals and blankets, bread and treacle, and soothing and cheering the victims with hopes of immense and inexpensive happiness in another world, when the process of working them to premature death in the service of the rich is complete in this (world)."

And to this we must now add, as Mr. Shaw has added in his "Preface" to *Androcles and the Lion*, the indictment of the church's attitude on the question of war—the surrender of the church in every land and in every age, to the war-lords of the world. If there is anything that it would seem that the church must denounce, or, if not denounce, at least refrain from defending, extolling, aiding and abetting, it would seem to be that slaughter of the battle-field which is the violation of brotherhood and the subversion of the divine rule of a universal God. And yet the church to-day and yesterday, with few exceptions, lifts its voice not on behalf of conciliation and goodwill, but on behalf of enmity, hatred, collective homicide. "If Christianity were now abolished and exiled by the Defence of the Realm Act," says Mr.

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Israel Zangwill, in his *The War for the World*, "there would be no difference whatever visible in the functioning of the state and the prosecution of the war." And all because, as I have been saying, the church has been willing to sell its birthright for the mess of pottage known as practical results. All because the church has been willing to compromise every principle, to qualify every ideal, to voice

"the easy speeches  
That comfort cruel men."

"At the outbreak of the war," says the Dean of Durham, England, with more frankness than is used by the ordinary prelate, "men awoke to the discovery that Christendom was really swayed by motives which had no pretence of being Christian, and that the churches had become parasitic, bestowing their facile consecrations on every national ambition, and failing to rebuke any national crime."

Now it is just at this point, and on this particular matter, that I would speak my protest. I believe most emphatically that the church should not in any sense be apart from the world, but on the contrary should be in the world, lead the world, change the world, rebuild the world. If there is any one gospel that I am here in this pulpit to preach, it is the gospel of "social religion," which is the gospel of a church come into the world, in the spirit of Christ, to save the world. But I also believe most emphatically that the church should come into the world not to accept the standards

of the world as the basis of relationship, but to set its own standards, without surrender of a single jot or tittle of their absolute idealism. I confess that I can see no distinctive mission for the church in the world save that of an institution dedicated to the perfect ideal, the absolute principle, the unalterable law of the spiritual cosmos. I confess that I can see no justification for the church save as a witness of that eternal and infinite God, who is the same yesterday, to-day and forever, "with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." There are plenty of other forces in the world to point the way of expediency, to show the goal of practicability, to preach the easy gospel of adaptation, compromise, evasion. It is not difficult to find business men to remind you of the truth of the saying that "business is business"—not difficult to find politicians to show you the prosperous ways of falsehood and deceit, not difficult in this age to find defenders of patriotism, preparedness and wars for righteousness. The world is full of these exponents of expediency as a sound philosophy of life. The church only loses itself in the crowd when it joins the witness of its voice to the vociferous clamours of the hour. It is only doing shamelessly in the name of God, forsooth, what men themselves are doing, without any necessity of spiritual prompting, in the name of their own selfish interests and desires. What the world needs, what the world must have if it is to be saved spiritually, is men, or institutions, which will proclaim justice though the heavens fall—which will declare



that "right is right since God is God," and will "sink or swim, live or die, survive or perish," on the merit of that simple proposition — which will set up as the guiding principle of their lives the affirmation of the prophet, Balaam, "I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord, my God, to do less or more." And where shall the world find the satisfaction of this great need if not in a church which is unswervingly faithful to the best, the highest, the truest that has ever been revealed to it from the mind of God?

It is this conviction of mine about the duty of the church and of its members to preach ideal truths and espouse ideal causes, with no question about feasible methods and practical consequences, which dictates my conduct in my profession. I believe in all seriousness that I am a minister of a church not of New York, or America, or Unitarianism, but of God. I believe that I am pledged, by my ordination vows, to proclaim not the passions and prejudices and whims of men, but the perfect will of God so far as it is given to me to see that will. I believe that it is my duty, as a minister of religion, to serve not the interests of any class, or any nation, or any social order, but the interests of that Kingdom of God which has not yet been established upon earth. It is not for me, as the minister of the church, to consider whether a certain individual act is unavoidable, but only whether it is wrong. It is not for me to ask whether a certain social reform is impracticable, but only whether it is just. It is not my business to ex-

plain or apologise or excuse or palliate; rather is it my business to define the standard, point the ideal, declare "Thus saith the Lord!"

Is it a question, we will say, of human freedom — the freedom of woman from social disabilities, of the black man from social outlawry, of the Jew from prejudice and oppression, of the workingman from wage slavery? Then it is not for me to bother with the difficulties in the way of emancipation, the dangers involved in lifting the yoke of bondage, the losses suffered by those now happily placed in positions of privilege and power. Rather is it for me simply to make plain that freedom to-day, as yesterday, is a condition of "life more abundantly" for men and women, the fulfilment of that will of God which is "the law of liberty," and therefore a principle which must be universally established. Is it the question of poverty? It is not for me to show how inevitable is poverty as a social phenomenon, to emphasise how impracticable if not impossible is every method which has ever been devised for its abolition or considerable amelioration, or to bid men to be patient under the burdens of wretchedness which poverty imposes upon them. Rather is it for me to point out, without qualification or evasion, that poverty is a crime, a preposterous defiance of divine providence, an impossible obstacle to the establishment of God's kingdom, and somehow, some way, must be destroyed. Or take the question of war! Shall I use my position, as a minister of religion, to outrival the diplomats, warriors

and munition manufacturers of our time in praising war as sometimes beneficent, or excusing it as sometimes necessary, and in using my utmost powers to induce men to enter the ranks of war when hostilities have come upon the world? War may be as inevitable or as sublime upon occasion, as you please. It may be as glorious to defend our country or invade another's country, as the poets have told us for unnumbered years. Every proposed method of abolishing war may have long since proved a failure. But I am here to proclaim the fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, the law of love. These know no exceptions, no qualifications — they are as unalterable as the laws which hold the planets in their courses. And with them the phenomenon of war under all conditions and in all places is absolutely inconsistent. This message may be unpatriotic, impracticable, dangerous. I would not deny the accusation. But this does not in any way alter the fact that this message is the only message which can find any place in religion. Therefore is it the only message which I, as a minister of religion, have a right to preach, without betraying the trust committed to my charge. A friend of mine in England, a minister of a Unitarian church in one of the largest cities in the kingdom, has beautifully defined the duty of the minister in time of war, in a recent letter — "We believe," he says, "that it is not the business of the Church of Christ anywhere to preach war (even in time of war) or to help war, but persistently to preach peace, and love,

and reconciliation, though it may be to deaf ears and maddened brains."

Such is my interpretation of my task as a Christian minister. Of course, at bottom, I would go much farther than this. I would assert that it is the duty of every man, just because he is a man and therefore a child of God, to stand for the uncompromised ideal—to "hew to the line, let the chips fall where they may"—to be a fanatic, if you will. Such men, hated and despised of their own time, have in later times been seen to be the saviours of mankind. But this wider question I do not at this moment consider. My concern is with the church and the world, with the minister as a leader of the church in the world. And I say to you that it is his duty to proclaim and serve the absolute ideal. That this ideal will be perfectly realised now is not to be expected. It is the tragic irony of life that, with society now ordered as it is, no one of us is able to live the ideal which we see. But the ideal is there, as God is in his heaven. And it is the church's specific and glorious task to keep this ideal as the treasure of the Most High, and commend it to the heedless world. It is the recognition of this fact that, in an earlier time, led men to make the church a place remote—they sought to save and serve the ideal apart from a lost world. But this to-day we cannot do. The church must be in the world—in it, but not of it. It must be in it, and yet above it, as the star is above the trackless sea; in it, and yet beyond it, as the mount of vision is beyond the rocky steep.

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This it is which Jehovah spoke to Solomon, at the dedication of the temple upon Mt. Zion. "If now thou wilt walk before me with integrity of heart and in uprightness, even thou and this people, then will I hallow this house which thou hast built, to put my name there forever; and mine eyes and my heart will be there perpetually. But if ye shall at all turn from following me, ye or your children, then shall this congregation be a proverb and a by-word among all people."

That "this congregation" may not "at all turn from following" God, but "walk before (him) with integrity of heart and in uprightness," and that God may thus "hallow this house," and "put (his) name here forever"—this is my prayer. I beseech you to join in this prayer, and to labour unceasingly for its fulfilment.



## LEGISLATION AND MORALS: CAN WE MAKE PEOPLE GOOD BY LAW?

My subject is the general problem of "Legislation and Morals"; or, more specifically, the discussion of the question as to whether we can ever hope to make people good by due process of law.

This question is as old, in Christian history, as the discussion by St. Paul, in his epistles to the Galatians and to the Romans, of the relation between what he called the Law upon the one hand and the spirit of Christ upon the other. Five hundred years, however, before these letters were written, this same problem was a favourite subject of discussion among the philosophers of Athens, and became the central theme of the greatest book which any one of these philosophers ever produced—namely, the *Republic* of Plato. How much farther back this question goes I cannot say, nor is it perhaps necessary that we should ascertain. For what concerns us here is not the fact that this problem as to the relation between the legislation of the state and the morals of its citizens is as ancient as Plato or perhaps even Moses, but the fact that this problem is modern as well as ancient, and is pressing upon our attention to-day more insistently perhaps than ever before in the whole history of the world. For we are living in an age, are we not, which is pre-eminently an age of legislation.

Here in the United States, for example, we have the national Congress in Washington, sitting most of the time from year's end to year's end, and no less than forty-eight independent legislatures, sitting some of them at intervals of three or four years, but many of them at some period every year — and all of these various legislative bodies pouring forth laws just as fast apparently as they can be drafted and enacted. Never before, we are told by competent historians, have men been so obsessed with the idea that all the problems of life, both individual and social, can be solved for all time by the simple process of legislation, as they are to-day. Under the steady pressure of public opinion, thousands of new laws are being placed upon the statute-books every year; and the great majority of these laws pertain not at all to the traditional task of raising and expending money for the support of the ordinary functions of government, but to the newer task of regulating and controlling the daily conduct of the people, in order that evil may be abolished and good may be established in its place. The number of hours that men and women shall work (per day or per week), the wages which they shall receive for their labour, the age at which children shall be allowed to go to work, the amount of air and light in our factories and houses, the quality of the food that we eat, the character of the clothing that we wear, the conditions under which we shall be allowed to read books or see plays at the theatre, the physical condition of candidates for marriage, the

hour at which children shall be taken off the city streets, the length of the sheets upon the beds of hotels, and of course the immemorial problems of drink and gambling and prostitution — all these and countless other details of private and social life are being taken within the pale of legislation, so that the task of knowing what is legal and what is illegal is really becoming one of the most serious problems of existence. Whenever we see an evil, or think we see an evil — pass a law against it! This seems to be the great ideal of our time; and most of us seem to be pretty definitely of the opinion that if we can only get laws enough enacted to cover every evil of human life, the millennium will forthwith be ushered in. The establishment of the Kingdom of God, in other words, is postponed by nothing more serious than our failure to provide an all-inclusive and therefore perfect legal code.

Now it is just this amazing development of legislative activity within recent years which has made the old question as to the relation between legislation and morals, as I have said, one of the most pressing problems of our age and generation. For in spite of the very strong popular trend in favour of new and better laws, there is still a very large and respectable body of persons who have no faith at all in the efficacy of legislation as a moral agent. These persons hold the categorical opinion that you simply cannot make people good by law — that you cannot transform character by fiat! You may pass as many

laws as you please — you may establish any political and industrial order that you may think wise — you may bring in the Kingdom of God by legislative enactment till the crack o' doom — but human nature is still human nature, the bad man is still the bad man and the vicious woman still the vicious woman, and therefore all your laws must remain ineffectual and all your elaborate social schemes go absolutely for naught. Men are exactly the same men under the laws of to-day, as they were under the laws of yesterday, and therefore the status of individual character and the actual condition of morality remain to all intents and purposes the same. Utopias have been established before now. More than one group of men and women has come together, has adopted an ideal code of law, and has then proceeded to show the world how the fruits of the spirit flourished in such a favourable legal climate. But every such community has sooner or later broken down, for no other reason under heaven than that men were men, and women women, and its members therefore the same imperfect, quarrelsome, jealous, ambitious, sinful persons within the Utopia that they had been in the outside world which knew nothing of perfect laws. The long and short of the matter is that the problem of morals is a problem not of society at all, but of the single individual. The task of making people good is a task which takes us not into the field of social order, but into the field of spiritual purpose. The only way to achieve any sure and lasting moral progress is to deal

direct with the human heart. We must take hold of the individual man, and change his selfishness into unselfishness, his greed into generosity, his hatred into love — and this means not laws or statutes, not executive decrees or judicial decisions, but the old and well-tried processes of moral and religious education. If a man hates the good and loves the evil, it makes little difference what we do in the line of legislation. He will still remain a creature of darkness and not of light. And if a man loveth righteousness and hateth iniquity, then again it makes little difference what may or may not be our laws. This man will still remain a son of God and a servant of all good. The essential thing is the attitude of the soul — and this can be strengthened in its good, or transformed from evil into good, not by laws of any kind, but only by those sweet and gracious influences of the spirit which have ever played upon mankind in some degree or other, and never wholly without avail.

An impressive illustration of this point of view was furnished us not long ago, it so happened, by a striking article in an issue of the *Forum* magazine, by the well-known ex-Mayor of Toledo, Ohio, Mr. Brand Whitlock, on that most discouraging and appalling of all moral problems, the social evil. In the discussion of the question as to what we can do in the way of grappling with this evil, Mr. Whitlock refers in scathing terms to the various vice commissions, which have been doing such systematic work in recent years, and especially to the Chicago Vice

Commission, with its declaration that the social evil must be met by a policy of "constant and persistent repression," in the hope of an ultimate "annihilation of prostitution." No one of these commissions, says our author, (least of all the Chicago body,) has anything to recommend, after all their months of investigation and discussion, but more laws and a more rigid and continuous enforcement of these laws. All unattended boys and girls must be sent home by the police at nine o'clock at night; there must be no seats in the public parks in the shadows; there must be a special morals police squad to handle the traffickers in this hideous trade; the sale of liquor in houses of ill-fame must be prohibited; dance-halls must be regulated and guarded; steamboats, employment bureaus, and lodging-houses must be more carefully inspected; assignation hotels must be closed and kept closed! These are the recommendations of our commissions, says Mr. Whitlock—"more law and more hounding by the police." And he goes on to give it as his opinion that such an appeal to legislation, for the solution of this evil, is bound to fail to-day, just as it has always failed "with all the machinery of all the laws of all the lawgivers in history." Solon tried every device in the Athens of his day, and failed completely to accomplish anything. In Rome there were the severest repressive laws in all the ancient world, and yet Gibbon tells us that immorality was always at its height when the laws were most rigorous and their enforcement the most terrible. Charlemagne tried

the same policy, and had to confess himself defeated. Philip II, of Spain, tried to do what his father, Charles V, had failed to do, but he found that his untiring efforts were without avail. John Calvin in Geneva was as remorseless in his treatment of prostitutes as was Peter the Great in Russia, but the only result of his inquisitions was to make Geneva the vilest city in all of Europe. The English Puritans whipped the prostitute, pilloried her, branded her, imprisoned her, and for a second offence put her to death—but it amounted all to nothing. And what are we doing at this very moment, but following exactly the same policy, along somewhat gentler and more humanitarian lines? In every city in America prostitution is a crime; and yet every police station in every one of these cities has an accurate list of the houses of ill-fame in its particular precinct, prostitutes are among the most familiar figures upon our streets, and Mayor Whitlock testifies to the fact that one night, when he was in the night court of Toledo, he saw a magistrate fine a street walker, and then suspend the fine so that she might go out and “earn” enough money to pay the fine!

Nothing that mankind has ever tried along these lines, says Mr. Whitlock, has been of the slightest avail in solving the problem of prostitution. And what is true in this case is true also in the case of such familiar evils as gambling and drinking. The resort to law and the enforcement of law is not only useless but worse than useless. It not only fails, but time and

again it actually stimulates and intensifies the evil which it is supposed to correct. In the great majority of cases, of course, the law is not enforced. Where an honest attempt is made at enforcement, it is usually unsuccessful, and nothing more is accomplished than to drive the evil to cover, where it flourishes more abundantly and under more dreadful conditions than ever before. And in the few isolated cases where the enforcement of the law is successfully accomplished, the only result is to scatter the evil into new places, whither the law and its minions cannot follow. Thus do saloons ring the border of a no-license town; thus does such a suppression of gambling as was achieved by Gov. Hughes drive the gamblers into burglary, highway robbery, white-slave trafficking, and other more terrible forms of crime; thus does the closing of a house of prostitution drive the inmates into tenements, lodging-houses, and apartments. Mr. Whitlock tells a wonderful story in this connection of Golden Rule Jones, of Toledo. Once during the mayoralty of this remarkable man, he was visited by a committee of ladies and gentlemen, with the demand that he obliterate the social evil, off-hand and instantly. These reformers were simple, brief, and to the point. The laws were being broken, and it was his duty to enforce them.

"But what am I to do with the women?" inquired Mayor Jones.

"Have the police drive them out of town," was the triumphant reply.



"But where shall I have the police drive them?" persisted the Mayor. "Over to Detroit, or Cleveland, or merely out into the country? They have got to go somewhere, you know."

This was a detail of the business which had escaped this delegation of citizens, and there was silence.

"I'll make you a proposition," continued Golden Rule Jones, true as always to his name. "You go and select two of the worst of the women, and I'll agree to take them into my home and provide for them until they can find some other way of making a living. And then each one of you take one girl into your home, under the same conditions. And then together we'll try to find homes for the rest."

The men and women in the delegation looked at him, says Mr. Whitlock, then looked at each other, and seeing how utterly hopeless it was to deal with so strange a man, they went away!

Now right here, in this episode, do we have the whole issue, as it is seen at least by the man who believes that you cannot make people good by law. After you have passed all your legislation against your evils, and then enforced the legislation to the limit, there still remain to be considered the persons who were engaged in these evils. The law has done nothing whatsoever to change the character of these persons, and make them better. It has simply driven them from their familiar haunts, like the beetles from a lifted stone; it has broken up their business and their pleasure; and it has cast them out upon

the world, to pursue their evil practices in other places and in other ways. They are the same kind of persons, laws or no laws, enforcement or no enforcement; and they are going to continue to be the same kind of persons, and live the same kind of lives, without the law, or with the connivance of the law, or in defiance of the law. Not one law which has ever been passed in any age, and not one officer who has ever been appointed to enforce this law, has ever made an evil person good. It has simply neglected this person, or outlawed him, or harried him, or persecuted him, or destroyed him — and all for the sake, as Mayor Gaynor used to put it, of “outward decency and order.” A more ineffectual policy, or, still worse, a more cruel policy, cannot be imagined. In every case of this kind, after all, it should be the people that should interest us, and not the conditions surrounding these people or produced by these people. And if these people are ever to be saved, as well as the conditions changed, we must have resort to something else besides law and its enforcement. Somehow or other, the farther one penetrates into this problem of morality, the nearer we seem to come to the human soul as the kernel and core of the whole business; and the more we listen for the right word of counsel, the more clearly we begin to hear the far-off whisper of the voice of God. Is not such a man as Dr. Richard C. Cabot right, after all, when he says of prostitution that it “can be attacked only in the individual soul, and by the individual soul over-

mastered by God"? And is not this same direct, and personal, and divine remedy the final cure, not only of prostitution, but of every spiritual ill to which human flesh is heir?

There can be few persons who will not see, just as I see, the cogency of this argument, and be inclined therefore to accept the conclusion that people cannot be made good by law, after all, and that all our enthusiasm to-day for new and better legislation is a kind of frenzied madness. What answer is there, for instance, to Brand Whitlock's simple historical statement that the policy of hostile legislation has had an unbroken record of failure from Solon's day to our own? What could be plainer than the psychology of the principle that morality pertains to the inner life of the soul and not to the outer life of the social order, and that we must overcome evil with good, therefore, by spiritual and not by social processes! And then, too, even if these two facts were not quite as obvious as they actually seem to be, must not our hearts be touched by the cruelty which is involved in the policy of passing a law against a certain evil, and then using this law as a club to beat out the brains of a practitioner of this evil? Could anything be farther from the spirit of Christianity, which finds its true expression not in the old law, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, but in the new dispensation, "Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more"? Is not Brand Whitlock right when he says of prostitution — and practically of every other evil — "If the world is

ever to solve this problem, it must . . . do away with its old laws, its old cruelties, its old brutalities, its old stupidities, and approach the problem in that human spirit which I suspect is so very near the divine. Once in this spirit, society will be in a position to learn something from history and from human experience, and what it will learn first is that puritanical laws, the hounding of the police, and all that sort of thing . . . have never lessened prostitution, but on the contrary have increased it. . . . Why is it constantly necessary to do something to people? If we cannot do anything for them, when are we going to learn to let them alone?"

Now all this sounds very convincing, to say the least. And yet I must confess that there is one very quiet assumption involved in all this argument against the efficacy of legislation as a moral agent, which makes me hesitate to accept the conclusion which is offered. I refer to the fact that, in all that is said by Brand Whitlock and persons of his way of thinking upon this question, it is assumed that the men and women who are involved in these various evils, of which we have been speaking, are bad in character and need therefore, by some process of reformation, to be made good. The very way in which these persons force their opinion upon us, by asserting that "you cannot make people good by law," shows that they believe that there are certain people in the world who must be made good, because they are now bad, and that the repressive legislation which has been enacted and en-

forced in all the ages of the past is the method which has been followed for effecting this great end.

Now as a matter of fact, if there is any one thing which is becoming increasingly apparent in this great age of ours, it is this — that, with very few exceptions, there are no people in the world who can be set down and classified from the very start as bad. For thousands of years, of course, we have been told by the Christian church that everybody was conceived in sin and born in iniquity, and that the whole problem of life was that of saving souls which were doomed to be lost; and every field of thought has inevitably been more or less influenced by this theological point of view. We have had endless talk about incorrigible children, and bad women, and criminal types; and we still hear these human figures referred to in our time as though they were actual realities and not pure figments of the imagination, or nightmares of an ignorant theology. But to-day, wherever the best thought of our time has extended its influence, this idea that there are any such realities as good people and bad people has wholly disappeared, and we find it safest, as well as most charitable, to talk about brothers, or comrades, or children of God — or just simply people, without any descriptive adjectives whatsoever.

Take, for example, this very matter of prostitution, about which we have just been speaking. What is more remarkable, in the findings of these very vice commissions, about which Brand Whitlock speaks so slightly in his article above referred to, than the

discovery that the women who make a living by selling their bodies, are not bad women at all, as they have been erroneously described for so many generations, but just women, with the ordinary passions and desires and weaknesses and problems of ordinary women. At the great Brussels Conference for the Prophylaxis of Syphilis and Venereal Diseases, held in 1899, it was repeatedly stated that the number of women who went into prostitution willingly, and remained in it when they had a chance to escape, was astonishingly small. The Chicago Vice Commission found many girls who were physically abnormal or mentally subnormal, and a few who described themselves as "born bad" or "actually immoral," but it testified that the great majority of girls "were victims of conditions and circumstances for which they were less responsible than their families, their employers, or the community." And this conclusion is exactly in accordance with the findings of Miss Maude Miner, who is doing such remarkable work with wayward girls in New York at Waverly House. "The large number of these girls," she says, in the Second Annual Report of her institution, "are not guilty of moral obliquity because they are actually bad, vicious, or depraved. In my work with girls during the last five years, I can truthfully say that I have seen very few who could be so classed. Many have drifted into the life through weakness of will or through domination by a stronger will. With the larger number there seems little room for reasonable

doubt that their wrongdoing has been due to the conditions under which they live and work and play."

Another illustration of this same fact comes to us from the field of juvenile delinquency. In the past it has been almost universally assumed that children, or the great majority of them at least, are naturally depraved. I know of nothing more terrible in all the history of humanity than the suffering which has been deliberately and even conscientiously visited upon little boys and little girls under the mistaken notion that they were bad, and that their badness must be whipped or starved or frightened out of them. Think of the little bodies that have been bruised, the little minds that have been terrorised, the little hearts that have been wounded and brutalised and broken, all because we have thought these youngsters were vicious. Now, however, thank God, all this superstition is passing away. We know to-day that children are just children, that is all, and that there is not so much as a single naturally evil propensity in any one of them, who is normally born. What men have interpreted as incorrigibility is only ignorance, curiosity, physical exuberance, animal spirits. "Boys as such are never bad," says the well-known superintendent of the Parental Republic in California. "I have learned," he continues, "that the boys who are called bad are simply the victims of circumstance and environment." Judge Lindsey, of Denver, Colorado, bears constant witness to the same fact, and has proved his faith in the case of hundreds of juvenile

delinquents who have come before him for trial in the Denver Court. And we all know, of course, of the remarkable work of Dr. Barnado, who organised his famous system for taking the boy criminals out of the slums of the great cities of England, and sending them to farms in Australia, South Africa, and Canada. Nearly 50,000 apparently hopeless boys, morally speaking, have been disposed of in this way, and in their new surroundings less than two per cent. have shown any tendency to revert to their earlier criminal practices.

And this same discovery, let me say, is just now being made also in the real field of criminology. For centuries, the mature criminal, like the bad woman, or the incorrigible child, was regarded as wilfully depraved, and as a result was treated with indescribable cruelty. In the nineteenth century came Lombroso, with his theory of "the criminal type," which threw the responsibility back from the individual to his family. To-day, however, we are rapidly abandoning this new idea of inheritance, along with the old idea of moral depravity, as a general explanation of criminality, and are coming to regard the criminal as the victim not so much of heredity as of environment. There are plenty of criminals, of course, who are physically and mentally defective, just as there is a sprinkling of criminals in every prison who are out-and-out moral perverts. But the average criminal is a perfectly normal man, whose fate is wholly to be explained by the fact that he has never had



a chance, or has been led astray by degrading and corruptive influences. Take, for example, the typical case cited by Prof. Scott Nearing in his valuable little book on *The Super Race*. Here is a so-called criminal in court, to answer to the charge of entering a lodging-house and stealing three pairs of trousers and a coat. On examining his record, it is found that last year he attempted to steal an automobile, and before this had served a two years' sentence for grand larceny. A thoroughly bad man, we say! But hold on a minute — let us see what is the story of this man's life! On making an investigation, it is discovered that he was born in a wretched slum, and into a vile room up three flights of dirty stairs in the rear of a tenement. His father, a dock labourer, earned about \$300 a year on an average. Oftentimes, in periods of unusual stress or occasional idleness, money would run out, the grocer would refuse credit, and the family would go hungry. It was during one of these periods of semi-starvation that this criminal, then an urchin nine years old, stole a banana from a freight car, and was sent to jail. He was confined with older criminals, and speedily taught the art of pocket-picking and shop-lifting. Released at the end of two months, and having nothing to do and no place to go, he instinctively tried the tricks which he had learned as the easiest means of keeping body and soul together. Soon detected stealing a pocket-handkerchief, he was returned to prison, and there took his post-graduate course in the ways and means of professional crime.

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What wonder that he is now here in the dock, confessing to the latest of the long series of his crimes, and awaiting calmly the latest of his punishments!

Now right here, in such examples as these, which are fast becoming the commonplaces of our time in the fields of sociology and penology, do we have convincing illustration of the fact, which I would impress upon your minds at this point, that there are no people who are wholly bad and who need therefore to be made good by law, or religious education, or personal influence, or any other system of reformation. Eliminating that small minority of persons, born in every generation and in all walks of society, who are physically abnormal, or mentally defective, or morally degenerate, we can say of people generally that they represent nothing more nor less than a mixture of good and bad impulses. In every one of us there is the downward tendency toward the life of physical indulgence, selfish ambition, personal aggrandisement and power; and in every one of us also there is the upward tendency toward the life of devotion, self-sacrifice, love—all that we know, in short, as moral and spiritual idealism. There is no one of us so good but what he has his inward struggles against selfishness, deceit, and lust. There is no one of us so bad but what he has his moments of noble striving for the true, the beautiful, and the good. The best of us embody the inherent possibilities of all that is in the worst; and the worst of us contain the inherent possibilities as well of all that is in the best. St.

Paul never wrote a truer word than when he depicted, in his letter to the Romans, the awful struggle that is going on in every one of us all the time between what he called the flesh and the spirit.

Now it is people of this kind, who are both good and bad, and not people who are wholly the one thing or the other, who are being born into this world of ours. Some of these people are born into an environment of such a character that, from the very earliest years on, they find every good impulse of their natures fostered and encouraged, and every bad impulse withered and repressed. Their homes are full of sunshine and fresh air, abundantly provided with food and clothing and similar necessities of life, and radiant in every nook and corner with the bright influences of affection, beauty, and quiet leisure. The streets upon which they walk are clean; the schools which they attend are uncrowded; the neighbourhoods which they frequent and the companions with whom they associate are far removed from every factor of social life which is ugly, sordid, and debasing. As they grow to early youth, they are introduced to art, literature, and music; they are sent to colleges and universities; and when at last they reach manhood or womanhood, they venture forth upon life's highway fully armed and equipped for the great adventure which lies ahead. It is seldom that we find children, reared under such social conditions as these, before the bars of our juvenile courts; seldom that we find girls who have thus been sheltered and nourished, walking

upon our city streets in quest of business; seldom that we find boys who have thus been trained and equipped entering voluntarily upon a career of crime. And the explanation is easy! It is not that these persons are any better morally than other people — they are normal, that is all! It is simply that, like flowers planted in fertile soil and bathed in sunshine and fresh air, they have known an environment which has fostered all the good that there was in them, and blighted all the bad. It is natural to be good under such conditions — so natural, that when some unfortunate goes wrong, we find ourselves inevitably talking about “bad eggs” and “black sheep.”

But how is it with the people who are born amid other circumstances — those hordes of men and women in city slum and rural cottage who constitute the great majority of humanity? These people, like these others of whom I have just been speaking, find within themselves the same natural mixture of good and bad. But instead of being helped by the social conditions into which they are born, and amid which they live and work from day to day, they find, on the contrary, that every influence is dead against them. Some there are among these denizens of earth who are born with indomitable and unconquerable wills, and these succeed in winning out even against the most terrific odds. And the world immediately does the grossly inhuman thing of citing these exceptional moral geniuses as proof that everybody can win out in the economic and spiritual struggle, if they really

want to—as though everybody could be a Shakespeare, or a Napoleon, or a Lincoln, by simply trying good and hard! The fact of the matter is that the great majority of men and women are simply average, that is all, and when they find themselves living in an economic and social environment which is ugly, unhealthy, and degrading, they go to pieces—first physically, and then slowly but surely morally! Do you wonder that the juvenile delinquents of Manhattan, with very few exceptions, are all produced by three specific neighbourhoods of the city, small in area, but unspeakably congested in population? Do you wonder that Miss Miner points out, as the most significant thing in the whole problem of prostitution, that “nearly all the girls” who go wrong are girls who have had to earn their living, ill-prepared and under unfavourable conditions? Do you wonder that the great majority of criminals are men who come from certain very definite strata of what we know as the lower classes of the population? Born into crowded homes which give no access to fresh air and sunlight, and which are filled with dirt, disease, and decay of every kind; denied clean and nourishing and adequate food; neglected and abused by parents who are worn out by exhausting and ill-paid toil; playing in dark tenements and dirty gutters and never in green pastures and by still waters; put to work in sweatshop or factory or store at the very age when freedom and joy are the natural accompaniments



of existence; living in small rooms crowded with boarders as well as members of the family, where all personal privacy and all standards of ordinary decency are absolutely precluded; overwhelmed, in short, from the very hour of birth, by all the conditions which grinding poverty makes inevitable in a great city to-day — what wonder that they go wrong sooner or later? What wonder that bad impulses grow, and good impulses wither and disappear? What wonder that the girls find it easy to become prostitutes, and the boys find it easy to become criminals? Why, when I consider the way the majority of people in this world have to live, when I consider the ceaseless struggle which they have to make for bread, when I consider the things of beauty and joy and love which they are denied from year's end to year's end, when I consider the degrading influences of physical depression, mental darkness, and spiritual atrophy which assail them every moment of every day — my wonder is not that so many of them give way morally, but, on the contrary, that so many, in spite of every adverse condition, actually succeed in living pure, honest, upright, righteous lives. Do you ask me if I believe in the divinity of human nature? I answer, yes! And if you want to know the grounds for my belief, I point you first of all not to the classic achievements of the martyrs and the saints and the heroes of ancient days, but to the martyrs and the saints and the heroes of our own day,

who are facing the indescribable horrors of economic dependence, and still, in spite of all, are keeping sweet, brave, and true!

Now right here, in such facts as these, perhaps, do we begin to come in sight at least of an answer to our question about "Legislation and Morals," which is very different from the one offered in the early part of this discourse — an answer, indeed, which is as different as the question itself is now seen to be different. There is no out-and-out problem here of taking a bad man and making him good. If that has got to be done, a surgical operation, a stay in a sanatorium, a visit to a revival service, a course in moral education, a gift of personal friendship, any one of these things may be efficacious, according to the circumstances of each particular case, but certainly not a new act of legislation. But the real question, I repeat, is not that of making bad people good, but of taking ordinary, everyday people, who are simply an average mixture of good and bad desires, and giving them a decent chance to do the right thing. Here are conditions all about us, in this social life of ours, which are certain on the one hand to weaken moral fibre and wither spiritual desires, and on the other hand, to tempt every frailty and foster every evil impulse. To stand up straight under such conditions is difficult and not easy — to stumble and fall under such conditions is easy and not difficult. If these depressing and corrupting conditions were ineradicable, if they could not be improved in any way, if they were rooted deep

in the unchanging order of things, we might try as best we could to reconcile ourselves to the inevitable. But these conditions are not ineradicable — they are not beyond the possibility and practicability of radical improvement! They can be changed, and changed not by relying upon the good-will of individuals, who in the great majority of cases are helpless to do anything as individuals, but by relying upon the due processes of law, which represent not only the good-will but the power of the community as a whole.

It is impossible for us, as single members of a community, to wipe out slums and destroy tenements — to secure parks and playgrounds and recreation centres — to improve factory conditions and abolish the labour of little children — to lower the hours of toil and raise the wages of all workers, men and women alike — to guarantee to every living soul an equal economic opportunity, and a fair and even chance therefore in the struggle for existence — to establish and maintain such a social system that no one person shall be handicapped, or morally tempted, and no person also unduly protected and favoured. It is impossible for me to do any one of these things alone, just as it is impossible for you to do any one of these things alone. But it is not impossible for you and me together to do these things. And the only effective way for us to proceed, in a government of law, is to see to it that the law is expressive of our will in this particular, as it is, or should be, in all others. And it is when we do this very thing — abolish social conditions which destroy



life and corrupt morals, by passing and enforcing tenement house laws, and health laws, and labour laws, and factory laws, and pure food laws, and minimum wage laws, and all the rest—it is then I venture to assert that we are going a long ways in the direction of making people good, or at least of preventing them from being bad, by law.

It is true, of course, that we cannot legislate morality, but what we can do is legislate conditions that foster morality. We cannot enact virtue by passing laws, but we can enact conditions which make virtue an infinitely easier and more natural thing than vice. We cannot prevent men from yielding to temptation by legislative action, but we can remove all unnecessary temptations from them. We cannot by any law or code or sign, by any legislative measure, executive proclamation, or judicial decision, redeem a single lost soul, but we can by one and all of these processes prevent that soul from becoming lost in the beginning. Nothing that we can do, through the machinery of government, can prevent a woman from becoming a prostitute if she really prefers that life, or a man from becoming a criminal, if he really desires to follow that career. But much that we can do, through the machinery of government, will make that deliberate choice of evil as remote and hideous and indeed unthinkable a thing as it is at this very moment in the case of the boys and girls in your families and mine. Human nature is easily influenced by its social environment either upward or downward. If our leg-

islation is wise and its enforcement rigid, we can create an environment which shall influence human nature always toward the good and never towards the evil. And just to the extent that this is done, I venture to assert that it is accurate to say that we are making people good by law!

Here, now, is a very different answer to our question from that offered by Mr. Brand Whitlock and those who think as he does. And yet I wonder, after all, as I have already intimated, whether it is the answers which are different, or the questions which the two sides have been considering. In all that Mr. Whitlock has said about the folly and impossibility of trying to make people good by law, he has had in mind the police laws which are aimed at punishing people after they have committed their offences — and I suppose that there is no one of us who would not agree with what he has said about laws of this character. But in all that we have been saying about the wisdom and possibility of trying to make people good by law, we have had in mind the social laws which are aimed at eradicating the conditions which induce people to commit offences in the beginning. Mr. Whitlock and his associates have had in mind the laws which punish the sinner, which are as old as time and have an unbroken record of failure. We have had in mind the laws which prevent the sin by removing the occasion for the sin, which are as new as the new era in which we are living, and, if the new penology and sociology are proving anything, are fast

demonstrating their success. We have been talking therefore about very different things, and I doubt, after all, if we are so very far apart. I quoted Mr. Whitlock, a few moments ago, as saying, you will remember, Why is it constantly necessary to do something *to* people? Why cannot we do something for them? And what is this, I ask you, but the very policy for which I am pleading? The one way to do something *for* people — to help them to be brave and strong and clean — is to give them a fair and honest chance. This is what we can do, and are doing, by our social legislation. And this it is which I have in mind when I say that it is possible, indeed necessary, to make people good by law!

And it is this very discovery that legislation has much to do with morals, which very largely explains, I imagine, the social enthusiasm and social consecration of our time. Our social reformers are not putting all these laws upon the statute books, because they have nothing better to do. They are not studying conditions and formulating legislation to meet these conditions, for the fun of it. On the contrary, they are giving their lives to this great work of lawmaking because they see that this is the road which leads straightest and surest to the Kingdom of God on earth. A great faith has in our time taken possession of humanity — namely, that men can be, want to be, and will be, good, if only they have a chance. A great determination has in our time taken possession of humanity — namely, that men shall have a chance to

be as good as they can be and want to be. The social legislation of our time is at once the evidence of this faith and the measure of this determination.

## THE CRIME OF CASTE, OR BARRIERS TO BROTHERHOOD

I HAVE more than once in my preaching laid it down as a fundamental proposition that the whole problem of human existence is none other than that of finding a way of living together in peace and happiness in a common world. There is nothing particularly original or new about this idea. Jesus certainly had it very distinctly in mind when he spoke of God as a father, of men and women generally as the children of God's spirit, and of society as one family in God. But it is a doctrine well-worth emphasising now and then, all the same. Here we are the inhabitants of one little planet, moving on its way through the spaces of the heavens like a ship upon its voyage across the seas. No one of us can leave this planet without perishing, any more than a passenger can leave a vessel in mid-ocean without similar disaster. No group of us can exterminate another group without bringing so great a flood of misery upon the world that the victor is well nigh as great a sufferer as the vanquished. We deceive and envy and abhor, we hate and declare war and fight; but when each has done his worst against the other to the point of exhaustion, we meet in council, and do at the end what might have been done just as easily in the beginning — arrange the terms under which we shall live to-

gether beneath one sky and upon one earth. Germany is now striving its utmost to "strafe" England, England in turn is now straining every nerve to crush and destroy Germany; but even though everything else be uncertain, this at least is sure, that when the war has been fought to its conclusion, England and Germany will be found to be living in the same world under terms that have been mutually agreed upon. Living together, in other words, in some degree of brotherhood, is the normal relationship of human existence. As one writer has recently put it in the *Hibbert Journal*, "Volcanoes may throw up their tons of fiery matter, earthquakes make foundations shiver, tempests turn the sea into rolling ridges, but all settles again. So war and the pride of empire, blood and iron and 'the will to power,' have their day of destructive triumph; but they pass, and the friendly human helpfulness rebuilds the ruin they have wrought."

It would seem now, in the face of such an undoubted truism as this, that men would long since have worked out a method of organisation which would enable them to live together in some degree of peace and harmony. It would not seem over-difficult to find those principles of goodwill which are the conditions of fraternal association. Not only, however, has this not been done, but the exact opposite seems to have been more or less deliberately attempted. Despairing of brotherhood, men seem to have made up their minds that the only way to live together, paradoxical as it may sound, is to live apart! Thus great

systems of government have been conceived on the basis not of bringing men together into one great family, but on the contrary of separating them into certain carefully defined and rigidly circumscribed classes, or castes. This is the theory of Plato in his *Republic*. The Athenian philosopher had a perfectly clear idea of the meaning and value of society — no man, he declared, could realise his virtue in isolation. But his ideal society, like the “*omnis Gallia*” of Julius Cæsar, was divided into three parts. In the first place, there were “the philosophers,” as he called them, who constituted the intelligence of the community, and whose duty it was to rule. In the second place, there were the warriors, who constituted the power of the state, and whose duty it was to guard. And lastly, there were the merchants, artisans, farmers, and slaves — the lower classes — whose duty it was simply to serve and obey the rulers and guardians who were above them. Every child was educated by the state, and upon coming to maturity, was assigned to that class for which, by native endowment, he seemed to be best fitted. Once assigned, there was no escape from one class to another, for the division into the three castes, which I have named, was of the most uncompromising character. “Any intermeddling in the three classes,” said Plato, “or any change from one class to another, is the greatest harm to the state, and may with perfect propriety be described as evil-doing.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See *The Republic*, Book IV, 434.

But it is not only in books that such a division of the social whole as this is seriously undertaken. India to-day, as for unnumbered centuries in the past, is the crowning example of all that we mean by "caste" as contrasted with "brotherhood." Here do we find society divided into four classes instead of three, as in the Utopia of Plato. At the top are the Brahmanas or philosophers, to whom are "assigned the duties of reading the Vedas, of teaching, of sacrificing of assisting others to sacrifice, of giving alms if they be rich, and of receiving gifts if they be poor." Next come the Kshatriyas, or soldiers, whose duties are "to defend the people, to give alms, to sacrifice, and to shun the allurements of sensual gratification." Then come the Vaisyas, or farmers and merchants, who "cultivate land, keep herds of cattle, carry on trade, and lend at interest." And lastly, there are the Sudras, the great submerged, whose duty it is to "serve the before-mentioned classes without depreciating their worth." A passage in the Vedas speaks of these separate groups under the analogy of the physical organism. "When they divided man, how many did they make him?" is the question. And to this there comes the answer, "The Brahmana was his mouth, the Kshatriya was made his arms, the Vaisya became his thighs, and the Sudra was born from his feet." The difference between the Brahmana and the Sudra is certainly as the difference between the head and the feet. Thus, to cite a single example, whatever crime a Brahmana may commit, his person and property are not



to be injured; but the goods of a Sudra may be seized by a Brahmana at any time, and his person is always in servitude. The gulf between the first three classes of Hindus is deep and broad, and crossed only under certain rigid restrictions of marriage and personal association. Between these "wearers of the sacred thread," however, and the fourth and lowest class, the gulf is absolute. Once a Sudra, always a Sudra — an outcast from the privileges of earth.

In such a hard-and-fast social organisation as this, now, do we have what must be regarded as an open contradiction of everything that we have come to mean by human "brotherhood." Imperfect as are our apprehension and application of Christian ideals, it would be as impossible to establish this caste system of India in our western civilisation, as to substitute for the existing constitution of New York State the constitution of Plato's ideal republic. And yet how many and how rigid are the class-distinctions which we recognise, and how far therefore are we still removed from that family-idea of which I spoke to you at the beginning. Go to Europe to-day, when the heat of war seems to have welded the people of each one of the belligerent countries into a single mass of action and emotion, and you will find on every side the survivals of the mediæval feudal system which once divided the king from the serf as absolutely as the Brahmana is divided from the Sudra. And even in this America of ours, the common meeting-place of all the tribes of earth, the "melting-pot" in which are merged the races, religions, nation-

alities of five continents, there are appearing evidences of class-distinction, class-feeling and class-struggle, which may well make us tremble for the fate of our beloved democracy. Not yet have we attained to the accomplishment of a true society. Not yet do we understand, in all its fulness, the great idea of a human family. The Fatherhood of God is still a dogma — the Brotherhood of Man is still a dream. We are a caste people, and not a Christian people. And the conditions of our caste, the barriers to our Christian brotherhood, are the things which I would discuss in this address.

First of all among these conditions which divide one man from another by the barrier of caste, is the fact of *colour*. Strange, is it not, that so slight a thing as the hue of a man's skin, should separate the human family into alien and hostile groups! Yet in all probability it is just here, in the chance complexion of a face, that the very failure of the ideal of brotherhood had its beginning. Certainly it is not without significance that the very ancient Hindu word for caste is "varna," and that this word in its primitive form means "colour." And just as it is interesting to note that this cause of separation goes back to the very origins of society, so also is it interesting to note that it survives to-day, in all its pristine vigour, in that nation which is the youngest of all the great nations of the modern world, and which has done more than any other, perhaps, to wipe out unworthy and unreasonable distinctions between men. The United States is

here the great offender — not because the citizens of the United States are naturally more prejudiced in this direction than other men, but rather because there are conditions in the United States which pertain in no other portion of the habitable globe. In those countries where white men predominate, there are not enough black men or yellow men to constitute a problem; and vice versa, in those countries where black men or yellow men predominate, there are not enough white men to constitute a problem. It is only in the United States that the races stand face to face in numbers upon both sides that are formidable, and as a consequence present for solution such a problem of racial adjustment as the world has never before encountered in all its centuries of history. So long as the black man was in slavery, of course, the problem of relationship did not exist, any more than there exists to-day a problem of the relations between a man and a horse. The Negro was a beast of burden, a piece of property, a labour machine — and there the thing began and ended. When, however, the Negro was emancipated, and thus lifted by a single stroke of the pen of Abraham Lincoln, to the high dignity of manhood, there came a different situation upon the instant. In the beginning of this new period of history, when the Republican leaders were in the saddle, there was an endeavour to extend to the freedman the privileges of citizenship, and thus admit him, so to speak, to the bosom of the political family. With the failure of this endeavour and the resulting restoration of self-government in the South, the

Negro was thrust down, by one device or another, into the position of an inferior; and he stands to-day just as truly a member of a caste as any of the Sudras of distant India. All the restrictions of the caste system upon marriage, upon the professions, upon social intercourse, especially that implied in eating and drinking, are here definitely established. Furthermore, that peculiarly loathsome feature of caste society in Europe — the Ghetto — is here finding its beginnings in the segregation ordinances, which confine the residences of Negroes to certain wards of a city, or certain counties of a state. And then in addition, there are developing here, in the relations between whites and blacks, certain new features of outlawry which are altogether distinctive of America. Such are the familiar "Jim Crow" laws, separating the races as they travel in public conveyances — the laws denying the Negro admission to schools, libraries, theatres, and public parks — the laws excluding the Negro as a Negro from the privileges of the ballot — the laws forbidding to the Negro equal rights of property, business opportunity, and personal liberty. Hard as it is to reconcile with the ideals of our government and our religion, the cold, hard fact still remains that the black man in this "land of the free and the home of the brave," in this year of our Lord 1916, is branded as an alien, cast down as an inferior, refused admission into the political and spiritual household of America. By every law that can be enacted, by every custom that can be imagined, he is denied that equal opportunity of "life, liberty and

happiness," which is granted to the humblest of the white men who come to our shores from the nations of Europe. In large portions of the South, the Negroes, if not actual slaves, are certainly not even peasants; rather are they peons or serfs, who exist like the masses of the Middle Ages by the grace and at the behest of the rulers of the land. All of which means that we have already, well-developed, the conditions of a caste system of society. Like the Jews and Samaritans of ancient Palestine, the whites have no dealings with the blacks!

Now as one who was bred in the State of Massachusetts, and who has coursing in his veins the blood of two generations of abolitionists, I was for many years an unrelenting critic of our southern fellow-citizens whom I held to be largely responsible for these conditions. As time has gone on, however, and I have grown a little older, I have gradually become more charitable in my judgment — for two reasons at the very least. In the first place, I have observed that the northerner, who talks so much about justice for the black man, develops exactly the same attitude toward the Negro population as the southerner whenever and wherever that population becomes numerous enough to constitute a social and industrial problem. It is not too much to assert that in many ways the lot of the Negro in certain portions of the North to-day is considerably harder than it is in the South. And in the second place, I have observed with great interest in recent years the development in California of the same colour problem which has long existed in Alabama, Mis-

issippi and adjacent states, with the single exception that the colour in this case is yellow and not black. In other words, our southern fellow-citizen is not different in any way from the rest of us in other sections of the country. We are human, every one, which means in this particular case that we all proceed to do exactly what he has done when we find ourselves face to face with the problem of the colour-line. Wherefore does it behoove us very carefully to heed the injunction, that we "judge not, that (we) be not judged."

But while my attitude toward the persons who are involved in this direful problem, has changed very greatly in recent years, my attitude toward the problem itself remains to-day what it has always been. To outlaw a man from our society, to close to him our institutions and professions, to stamp him forever with the brand of inferiority, because of a personal characteristic for which he is not responsible, which he cannot change, and which has no remotest connection of any kind with his essential character as a man, is to my mind not only ridiculous but wicked. It is as absurd and unjust to doom one man to social degradation because his skin chances to be black or perhaps yellow, as it would be to doom another man to similar degradation because he chanced to have red hair, or carry a mole upon his cheek. In neither case is any attention paid to those qualities which are essential to the dignity of manhood; and in both cases is condemnation passed upon an entire group of persons, without regard for individual exceptions. As to whether the dark

races are equal, from the intellectual and moral point of view, to the white race, I do not know. There are plenty of scholars who assert that they are not; there are other scholars, like Prof. Boas of Columbia, for example, who declare most emphatically that they are. For myself, when I see the marvellous progress which the Negroes have made in this country during the last half century under the most serious disadvantages; when I consider the men whom they have produced — prophets like Frederick Douglass, statesmen like Booker Washington, educators like Major Moton, poets like Paul Lawrence Dunbar, scholars like Prof. DuBois, musicians like Samuel Tayler Coleridge — and then, when I look across the seas to the Empire of the Mikado and see what the Japanese have done in the space of a generation, I am tempted to believe that the colour of the skin has little to do with the basic elements of genius and character. But in neither case does this question touch the real heart of our problem. If the coloured races are equal to the white, they are entitled, of course, to equal opportunity with the white. If, on the other hand, the coloured races are inferior to the white, then are they entitled by way of compensation to something more than equal opportunity. But the important thing to note is, as Edmund Burke points out in his famous speech on *Conciliation with America*, that there is no just method of drawing up “an indictment against a whole people.” It is a crime to thrust down an entire group of persons into a pit of degradation, from which no escape in individual cases is toler-

ated. Inferior or not inferior, the way must be kept wide open for every black man and yellow man, like every white man, to attain the utmost fulfilment of his powers under the most favourable circumstances; and when such fulfilment has been realised, personal recognition and association must be granted as freely in the one case as in the other. It is not surprising, to my mind, that, when the apostle Philip was ordered by "an angel of the Lord" to "go toward the south . . . from Jerusalem to Gaza," and discovered that his mission was to "a man of Ethiopia," he "preached Jesus" unto the Negro as freely as though he were a white man, and going side by side with him into the water, baptised him gladly in the name of the Lord!

Turning now from the castes which are established on the line of colour, I come to a second barrier to brotherhood — namely, that of *creed*. If it is surprising that one man should refuse to have anything to do with another man, because of the colour of his skin, it is even more surprising, to my mind, that he should refuse to have dealings with him because of the character of his opinions. And yet, as a plain matter of history, nothing has created such bitterness between man and man, and thus dug such wide and deep gulfs of separation, as matters of political and theological belief. Examples of this kind of caste organisation, on the basis of creeds, are so abundant as to be well-nigh embarrassing. But we do not have to look very far for that particular example which is most significant and terrible. I refer of course to the endless



persecution of the Jews by those who acclaim themselves the followers of the gentle Nazarene.

I suppose that, in all fairness, we must say that the Jews are not wholly irresponsible for the conditions of caste-life which have been their destiny in all ages of Christian history. There is no question but what the Jew's belief in his unique character as "the chosen people" of the Lord, his rigid fidelity to his own peculiar customs of daily life, his steadfast refusal to assimilate in any fashion with the people among whom his lot has been cast, have all played their part in bringing down upon his devoted head such a storm of hatred and abuse as has been borne by no other single people since the beginning of the world. But when you have said the most and the worst that can be said about the exclusiveness of the Jew, you have left altogether untouched that thing which is the central factor in the persecutions of outlawry and death which he has suffered. At the heart of the whole wretched business is the resentment of the Christian against the Jews' repudiation of Jesus, and the determination of the Christian to wreak vengeance upon those whom he regards as spiritually guilty of the Master's crucifixion. Nothing is too bad for the man who believes what the Jew believes, and does what the Jew is not unwilling to do. Therefore is this unhappy people cast altogether out of the circle of Christian charity. They are thrust into nameless Ghettos, burdened with legal disabilities, outraged in property and in person. Again and again, as in Spain in the Middle Ages, they are expelled from their homes

and driven into wildernesses and deserts. Again and again, as in Russia yesterday, they are set upon by the Black Hundreds, and murdered, men, women, and children, in cold blood. Again and again, as in the Great War at this present time, they are the playthings of contending armies — the folk whom none may defend, and all may plunder and destroy. To us here in America, these things seem far away and therefore as unreal as a parable or legend. We cannot imagine suffering such horrors as these which have been the bread and meat of the tribes of Judah for centuries gone by — much less can we imagine inflicting such horrors upon others, even Jews. And yet, in our feeble and timid way, are we not ourselves persecutors, and under the conditions of our free democracy, do we not do all that in us lies to reduce our Hebrew brethren to the condition of a “despised and rejected” caste? In how many of the high-toned clubs of New York, are Jews admitted on the same terms as Gentiles? In how many of our summer hotels can a man of Hebrew extraction find hospitality? In how many of our colleges are Jewish boys received by their fellow-students without discrimination? Why is that when Mr. Brandeis is appointed to the bench of the Supreme Court by President Wilson, it is regarded as a matter of great public importance that this lawyer is a Jew? In America, as in Russia, the Jews compose a caste, and receive all the disabilities and degradations which belong to such a position. To the limit of our daring, and within the recognised restraints of our law and custom, we scorn these people,

spit upon them, outlaw them. In New York as in Kishinieff there is a Ghetto — and the difference in its character is the difference not between the feelings of Americans and Russians, but between the weapons of persecution which are employed.

But it is not merely of the Jews that I would speak in illustration of the kind of caste that exists on the basis of religious creed. Let me ask you what we are to think about the agitation which springs up periodically in this country, as in other Protestant countries, against our brethren of the Roman Catholic Church? The nature of this agitation I need not describe at any length. It takes the form of such a newspaper as *The Menace*. It conducts secret and unscrupulous campaigns against candidates for political office who are guilty of the crime of being Catholics. Once in a while it breaks out openly in such an organisation as the American Protective Association, of unholy memory. But always its purpose is the same — to brand the Romanist with the brand of Cain, and make him “a fugitive and a wanderer in the earth.” And all on the ground, forsooth, that the Roman priesthood is corrupt, that the Roman hierarchy is secretly hostile to our American democracy, and that no man can honestly be an American and a Romanist at the same time! Now that the Catholic clergy are far from perfect I can readily believe; that the Catholic Church in spirit and in principle represents the exact antithesis of the free, progressive ideals of America, I must admit; and that I, as an individual, could not be an American and

a Catholic at one and the same time, I cannot deny. But that every priest is a sinner after the flesh, and every Catholic layman is a secret traitor, I frankly find it impossible to believe. If I had no other evidence before my eyes than the history of Catholicism since this war started — the refusal of Pius X to bless the arms of Austria, and his death from a broken heart over his failure to prevent war, the unfaltering fidelity of his successor, Benedict, to the universal ideals of his church — the noble letters of Cardinal Mercier in protest against the German violations of Belgium — the wonderful appeal of the Belgian clergy to their colleagues of the Empire — if I had no other evidence than this, I would have enough to confute the movement in this country to reduce the Catholics to the condition of pariahs. After all, I cannot get away from the idea that Catholics, after the analogy of Jews and Negroes, are Americans before they are Catholics, and men before they are Americans. There are fundamental human qualities in us all — and among these qualities are “love, joy, peace, long-suffering, prudence, gentleness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance,” against all of which, we are told, “there is no law.” A man is not deprived of these qualities, if he is born a Catholic, neither does he put aside these qualities, if he becomes a Catholic. Nothing is more ineradicable within us than our humanity. Everything else is superficial in comparison. See this, trust this, rest in this — and behold, the caste of Catholicism, like the caste of colour, becomes intolerable. “Beloved, now (at bottom), we are

the sons of God," and it doth not greatly matter what, aside from this, we may or may not be!

But it is not in colour and creed only that we find the conditions of what I have ventured to call the crime of caste. Fully as important as either one of these conditions which I have mentioned, at least from the standpoint of the future, are the *class* distinctions which divide men on the basis of occupation or social standing. In Europe, these distinctions, as we know them to-day, had their origin in that feudal system which was the only government that the peoples of the continent knew for a period of at least five hundred years. At the top was the king, with the great company of princes, dukes, and bishops of the land. Then came the more or less independent burghers, in the various ranks of merchants, artisans and apprentices. Beneath these were the free peasants. And then came that great mass of serfs who were attached to the soil, and thus were little better than slaves. In the heyday of its prosperity, this was a system of caste almost as rigid as that of India; and it is interesting to note how, in this late age, when feudalism as a form of government has long since disappeared, the outlines of the system still survive. Take England, for example. Here at the top are the lords — dukes, counts, barons, almost without number — who live on the land, monopolise the offices of the army, and enjoy all to themselves the upper of the two houses of the imperial legislature. Then come the bankers, manufacturers, brewers, and professional men who enjoyed, until a comparatively few years ago, al-

most a monopoly of the House of Commons. Then comes what is known as the great middle class — the traders and small merchants, who are themselves divided into various subsidiary classes. Thus, in a drama of English life recently produced in this country, a certain character, on the occasion of her marriage, begins at once to “lord it” over her sisters, and when asked for an explanation of her pride, points out with great emphasis that, whereas her sisters are still the daughters of a retailer, she is now become the wife of a wholesaler, which unquestionably makes all the difference in the world! Then below the traders come the labourers and farmers. And last of all, that unhappiest of English classes outside the wretched dregs of the city slums, the starving agricultural labourers of the country-side.

The rapid extension of democracy in England in recent years has, of course, done a great deal in the way of tearing down the barriers of separation between certain of these classes which I have just now described. What is even more important in this direction, however, is the development within the last one hundred years of what we know to-day as capitalism, which is redistributing all the ancient classes of society into the two hitherto unknown classes of capitalist or employer on the one hand, and labourer or employé on the other. And it is here, in this new division of the social whole, that class as a condition of caste organisation is becoming manifest in our own country. America, of course, has never known the distinction between lords and commons, or burgher and peasant. For a time

there was practically no difference between capitalist and labourer, so few in the early days were accumulations of capital and so free the conditions of advancement from one status to the other. But to-day all this is changed. In America, exactly as in England and France and Germany, the development of class-consciousness between employer and employé has been the most important historical event of our time. To a greater extent than most of us realise, I believe, we are developing, in all our capitalistic countries, a gulf of separation between those who invest and those who labour, which means a caste organisation of the most threatening description. That this gulf, if allowed to widen, means the death of our democracy, and the end sooner or later of our civilisation, are among the least of the dreadful prophecies that must be made about it. And just in this one fact is the light that burns as clear as a beacon in the darkness of the labour-struggles of our time. These struggles are interpreted again and again as the selfish attack of the have-nots upon the haves — as a blind endeavour of the proletariat to seize the riches which they themselves have been unable to earn, and which they envy in the hands of others — as a mad expression of the lust and cruelty which are latent in the heart of the primitive man. At bottom, however, there is something far deeper and finer than anything of this kind. In its naked reality, this labour struggle is nothing in the world but an instinctive revolt against the doom of caste — it is a passionate sacrifice for the ideal of brotherhood. It is only the

latest and, in some ways, the mightiest of the battles which man has been fighting since the beginning of the world to tear down the artificial barriers which cut him off from brotherly relations with his fellows. At one time, it was the fight of the slave against the master; then it was the fight of the subject against the king; now in our time it is the fight of the labourer against the capitalist. And always, in every form, is it the fight to tear down what divides, to smite the fetters of caste, to establish a veritable family of brethren. If it is true that the few are plucked down from their high estate, it is also true that the many are lifted up from the pits of degradation in which they languish. And always is the resultant redistribution of society on the common level of equal opportunity and power, the salvation of the race. The caste of colour and of creed are bad enough, heaven knows; but neither one of these conditions of alienation, to my mind, is so fatal to human welfare as the class distinctions between high and low, great and small, capitalist and labourer, employer and employé. Our labour battle is terrible — it is an indictment of our intelligence and goodwill as a people that we solve this problem in no more wholesome and happy way. But infinitely better is this struggle, than the slow hardening of our two great social classes into the castes of the rich and of the poor. Better the earthquake than the glacier — better the throes of birth to newness of life than the still, cold torpor of perpetual death!

This brings me to the last barrier of brotherhood



of which I would speak in this address — namely, the barrier of wealth, or, as I would like to call it, somewhat vulgarly perhaps, the barrier of *cash*. It would seem at first sight, perhaps, as though this condition or line of caste were the least harmful of any that I have mentioned. And yet I must admit, for my own part at least, that this is the one of all the four, of which I have the most unsatisfactory understanding, and with which most certainly, I have the slightest sympathy. Thus, I think I know what is meant by a sincere person who argues, not from prejudice but from science, that the Negro is a human of an inferior type, and is to be regarded therefore as a menace to a white civilisation. I am sure that I understand the attitude of my friend who declares that it is quite impossible for the American democracy and the Catholic hierarchy to exist together side by side within the borders of the same land. I am confident that I can enter into the mind and heart of the man who condemns the activities of labour, and regards the subjection of labour to capital as the condition of a stable society. All of these positions I can understand and even sympathise with — although no one of them, as I have shown, is my own. But when I come to the man who bases his claims for superiority not on the character of his race, or the truth of his creed, or the prestige of his class, but on the mere sum of money which he possesses — money which he may have made himself, but which is quite as likely to be the earnings of other hands — money which may be the fruit



of honest labour or skilful administration or inventive genius, but is quite as likely to be the product of luck or out-and-out robbery — money which may be used as an instrument of love, and thus to the blessing of mankind, but may quite as easily be used as an instrument of power, and thus to the despoiling of mankind — I find a man with whom it is almost impossible for me to sympathise. Just as there is nothing so delightful as the man who, with large wealth in his possession, remains an essential democrat, scornful of the false distinctions which he might purchase with his money — so is there nothing, to my mind, quite so loathsome as the man, or the woman for that matter, who on the basis of nothing in the world but cash assumes the power of leadership and social control. We all of us recognise the especially unworthy character of this type of caste — hence our contempt for the “fads and fancies” of the *nouveau riche*, our hatred of the snob and the cad, and our persistent refusal to take seriously a so-called “society” here in America which, in contrast to the lordly society of England or of France, rests upon no prouder foundation than that of the money coined out of oil-wells, hogs, or steel-rails. Whenever I look upon these aristocrats of cash who never lift anything heavier than a cigarette or a golf-club, or give their minds to anything more important than steering a yacht, whose chief boast is that they never did a day’s work in their lives, and whose one particular horror is that of association with the “great unwashed” — I always find myself thinking of Shake-

speare the poor player, of Robert Burns the peasant ploughman, of Abraham Lincoln the ignorant rail-splitter, of Thomas Edison the train-boy, of Jesus of Nazareth the carpenter! The whole trouble with this matter of cash, as a condition of caste, is that it fails to touch, even remotely, those things which really constitute what we mean by manhood and womanhood. If there is anything that is alien to the glories of the spirit, it is this purely material talisman known as money. There are rich men who are men in every sense of the word — there are poor men who are men in every sense of the word. But the manhood in each case is something altogether apart from the accident of cash. And yet it is this which comes nearer to constituting what we know as caste here in America than anything else which could be named. So far as we have any aristocracy in this country, it is an aristocracy not of brains as in India, not of birth as in England, not of achievement as in France, but of that sordid thing, money. Here more truly than in the twelve millions of our Negroes, the fifteen millions of our Catholics, the thirty millions of our labourers, here, in these little groups of the “four hundred,” in this city or in that, is the real menace to our civilisation. The worship of money, with its resulting caste of cash, ruined the Roman Empire, and it is not inconceivable that it may yet ruin the American democracy.

Such are the lines of caste — the barriers to brotherhood — which I would emphasise. It must have become evident to you, as I described each one,

that the same great evil is inherent in them all. It makes no difference whether it be colour, or creed, or class, or cash — we have in each case a distinction between man and man, which recognises as important that which is superficial, accidental, or temporary, and ignores as of no concern that which is fundamental, essential, and eternal. It is only when we look at the surface of things that we can divide men into groups and rate them as superiors and inferiors. When we pierce beneath the surface, and come face to face with the realities of life, we see that men are simply men, endowed with the same abilities, burdened by the same woes, beset by the same temptations, doomed to the same destiny. What Shylock, in the *Merchant of Venice*, says of the Jew, must be said of every despised race of humankind. "Hath not a Jew eyes? hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same summer and winter, as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? if you tickle us, do we not laugh? if you poison us, do we not die?"

Humanity, with all its common goods and ills — this, after all, is the only thing that counts. And there is but one caste which is consistent with this — namely, the caste of *character*. "The good, the kind, the brave, the sweet" — these are the superior ones of earth. And behold, the paradox! that this very distinction of soul which separates these men and women from their fel-

lows, in a great aristocracy of the spirit, unites them again to all their kind by the bond of joyful love. "He that is greatest among you shall be your servant." To be great, is to be lowly — to be exalted, is to be humble — to be the son of God, is to be the brother of mankind. That caste, therefore, is alone valid, which conquers caste. That aristocracy is alone just which is democracy.

"Then, brother man, fold to thy heart thy brother!  
For where love dwells, the peace of God is there,  
To worship rightly is to love each other;  
Each smile a hymn, each kindly deed a prayer."

## **THE WAR**



## MAN: AN END, NOT A MEANS

**THERE** are few questions which have been more widely discussed among church historians and theologians in recent years than the question as to what is the greatest of the blessings which Christianity has conferred upon the human race. The answers to this question have at times been various, but in nearly every case the conclusion has been reached, sooner or later, that this blessing is an idea, and that this idea is to be found in the great conception of the sanctity of human life. Mr. Lecky, in his *History of European Morals*, puts this sublime idea first among what he calls "the priceless blessings (which) European civilisation (has) bestowed upon mankind"; and all competent authorities, with whom I chance to be acquainted, are in agreement with him upon this point.

If we seek the origin or cause of this idea, we shall find it without any question in the revolutionary interpretation of human nature which was inherent in the teachings of Jesus and his immediate successors. Previous to the advent of the Nazarene, men were regarded almost exclusively in the mass, and were therefore looked upon as having little or no significance as individuals. Of course there were always certain favoured men, like the kings and the priests, who were set apart as chosen beings, and sometimes regarded as divine. But the vast majority of mankind were never raised to any dignity



of recognition or of power. They were simply the common herd — the *hoi polloi*, as the Greeks called them — “the hewers of wood and the drawers of water,” as they are described in the Old Testament. As contrasted with the kings and princes, they were like so many animals, conveniently provided for the service of the great ones of the earth, and in themselves of no more distinctive value than “the ox (which) knoweth his owner,” and “the ass (which knoweth) his master’s crib.” Plato, the greatest teacher of antiquity, interprets this whole idea of human nature with marvellous clearness, in the parable which appears at the close of the third book of the *Republic*. All men, he says, were fashioned in the bowels of the earth, “from whence, as soon as they were thoroughly elaborated, the earth, their common mother, sent them to its surface.” In the composition of some few of these men, the gods mixed gold; and these are the ones who are of “the highest value” and therefore competent to rule. In the composition of others, the gods made silver an ingredient; and these are the ones who compose the class of guardians or soldiers, who are charged with the task of protecting the state from invasion. In the composition of the great mass of men, however, there is involved no nobler ingredient than that of iron or copper. These men therefore are of little or no value, and must be doomed to the degradation of toil in the field or at the workbench. The rulers, says Plato, must “observe nothing more closely . . . than the children that are born, to see which of these metals enters into the composition of

their souls; and whenever a child is born . . . with an alloy of copper or iron, they are to have no manner of pity upon it, but giving it the value (or lack of value) that belongs to its nature, they are to thrust it away into the class of artisans or agriculturists."

Now it was into a world, the finest mind of which could reach no loftier conception of human nature and human destiny than this, that there came the revolutionary ideas of Christianity. At the bottom of them all was Jesus's fundamental conception of God as the loving father of the race, and of men as the children of his holy spirit. This divine relationship, which was represented as belonging to all men, and not merely to the disciples or even to the Jews, at once, of course, put the precious gold, to use the Platonic phraseology, into the composition of every human being, however humble or insignificant from the worldly point of view; and thus inevitably gave a value to human nature in every form and under every condition which it had never had before. Every man was now raised to the dignity of a child of God. Every man was now assured of his appropriate share of the love and care of God. Every man was now infinitely precious in the sight of God, even though he seemed to his fellow-mortals to be of no more worth than the dirt under their feet. Again and again did the Nazarene emphasise the fact, as though he knew that it was difficult for his contemporaries to understand, that even the least among the sons of men were to be cherished and not despised. "See that ye despise not one of these

little ones"—“It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish”—“Verily I say unto you that inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it not unto me”—these are among the most characteristic, as well as the most beautiful, of the sayings of the Master.

Exactly this same point of view as to the worth of human nature, is found in the letters of Paul, although the language in which it is expressed is that of the theologian rather than that of the popular teacher. To Paul, even as to Jesus, all men are “the offspring of God,” and therefore of divine lineage. What the Apostle to the Gentiles adds to the doctrine of the Nazarene is the whole conception of the Atonement, by which the worth of even the humblest and most sinful individual is represented as so great that the sacrifice of the Son of God upon the cross of Calvary was not too high a price to pay for his redemption. St. John sets forth this same doctrine in his famous statement that “God so loved the world,”—by which is meant of course the people in the world—“that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but should have eternal life.” Other statements of this same idea are numerous. But they all come down to exactly the same proposition, that all men are related to God and thus have a spiritual significance which is incalculable. They are divine beings, destined to immortality, “united to one another by a special community of redemption.” Not one can be

spared from the divine plan. Not one can be "cast as rubbish to the void." The most wretched beggar at the gate, like the most benighted heathen in a distant land, has an eternal significance in his life which far outruns anything that eye hath seen, or ear heard, or the heart of man conceived. Every human creature is made of gold, and therefore is every human creature, like the favoured governors in Plato's ideal society, of "the highest value."

It was out of this revolutionary conception of human nature that there grew up that distinctively Christian idea of the sanctity of human life, which constitutes, as I have said, the greatest blessing that Christianity has conferred upon mankind. What this regard for human life really meant for the safeguarding of the higher interests of the race was illustrated at the very opening of Christian history, by the startling declaration that it is a sin for one man to kill another man for his amusement, or convenience, or the gratification of any selfish motive whatsoever.

That this idea was to all intents and purposes a discovery of Christianity is conclusively shown by the fact that never, in any part of the world or among any race of men, has nature provided any instinctive promptings in this direction. In the early stages of barbarism, of course, man was little better than an animal, and therefore was as ruthless and bloodthirsty in his dealings with his fellows as any tiger of the jungle. But what is surprising for us of this present day to discover is that, even in well-ordered and

highly developed societies, where moral principles and spiritual ideals have not been by any means unrecognised, there has been little if any improvement in this direction. Among the noblest peoples of antiquity, as also among some of our own ancestors of fairly recent times, the wanton and indiscriminate killing of men of some particular class or nation has been regarded with no more compunction than the killing of animals in the chase. The Greeks, who built the Parthenon, and carved the Apollo Belvidere, slaughtered the "barbarians," as they called all foreigners, whom they took captive in battle, with the same indifference that they slaughtered beasts within the shambles. The Romans put the populations of conquered cities to the sword without a thought, killed their slaves like so much vermin, and butchered gladiators by the thousands to make a holiday. And what the early Spanish conquerors did to the natives of Mexico and Peru cannot be told upon the pages of history, for the very horror of the telling.

Nor is it only the baser individuals or the unthinking multitudes who have been thus guilty of what we would regard to-day as the most hideous kind of cruelty. On the contrary, the best men of the times, those who in all other respects must be regarded as conspicuous for their humanity, have been the very ones who have supported the violent destruction of human life and themselves oftentimes engaged in the practice. Thus Samuel, as we are told, was outraged by the kindness of Saul in sparing the lives of the



captured Agag and his Amalekites, and himself seized the conqueror's sword and "hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord." Plato described infanticide, or the exposure of unwelcome and unfit infants, as not only a defensible but a commendable practice. Cato, "the noblest Roman of them all," always got rid of his aged and useless slaves by selling them to some slave-driver who was willing to beat the last few ounces of strength out of their wretched bodies. Pliny, the scientist and philosopher, applauded the games in the arena. Titus, a gallant soldier and perhaps the most high-minded of all the emperors who sat upon the throne of the Roman Empire in the first century after Christ, visited so perfect a vengeance of fire and sword upon the helpless inhabitants of Jerusalem, that the siege of the holy city has been remembered from that day to this as one of the most terrible events in the history of the world. The fact is that, in times past and apart from the influence of Christianity, human life has never been regarded as in any sense sacred and therefore in itself entitled to protection. When the pupil of Socrates and the writer of the immortal *Dialogues* could see nothing wrong in the taking of a little child from its mother's arms and exposing it to death upon some bleak hillside, it may not be regarded as surprising that the great masses of mankind have been slow to rise to universal standards of justice and compassion.

Now, the advent of Christianity was remarkable for no one thing more truly than the absolute break

which it signalised with this whole attitude of the ancient world upon the question of regard for human life. The ancient commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," was now interpreted from a universal point of view which had been hitherto unknown, and was made to apply for the first time to all men everywhere, regardless of race, colour, nationality, or condition. To destroy life under any circumstances or for any purpose was a sin, to be avoided as one would avoid the plague. In accordance with this sublime conviction, the Christians assailed with the greatest courage and determination many of those extraordinary practices which are now regarded as so hideous, but which were very generally accepted as more or less praiseworthy or at least venial by the society of the first century after Christ, and were never seriously brought into disrepute or even question until the advent of this religious movement. Thus, the Christians denounced the practice of abortion "with unwavering consistency and with the strongest emphasis." They condemned infanticide as an unspeakable enormity, and were active in furnishing shelter and protection to abandoned children. They swept away, by the consuming fire of their hostility, that crowning shame of a decadent civilisation, the gladiatorial games. "There is scarcely any single reform so important in the moral history of mankind," says Mr. Lecky, in his *History of European Morals*, "as the suppression of the gladiatorial shows, and this feat must be almost exclusively ascribed to the

Christian church." And the same thing must be said in regard to the emphatic condemnation by the early Christians of suicide. Many of the pagan moralists were opposed to the act of self-destruction, and argued ably and untiringly against it. But the fact remains true, none the less, that not until Christianity appeared with the reinforcement of its powerful message of the sanctity and inviolability of the soul, did this offence come to be regarded with that abhorrence which is so characteristic of Christian history.

Against all such cruel practices as these did the Christian movement throw the whole weight of its influence in these primitive days of its organisation and development. Time and again even more extreme positions were taken in antagonism to accepted custom. Thus many Christians, like Tertullian in the second century, Origen in the third century, and Lactantius as late as the fourth century, taught the unlawfulness of human bloodshed of every kind; and those who followed such teaching, and they were by no means few, resolutely refused to take up arms as soldiers, to serve the state as public executioners, or even to bring a capital charge against an offender. The opinions of Christians, however, on these more delicate questions, were not unanimous; and it must be admitted, with however much reluctance, that when the church gained supreme ascendancy in the latter part of the fourth century, it speedily retreated from these extreme positions of its more consistent



teachers, which were so hard to reconcile with existing conceptions of national and social security. Nay, more than this, from the fatal moment of its triumph in the Roman world, the whole history of Christianity becomes very largely the pathetic and shameful story of the church's compromises with its own doctrine of the inviolability of human life, and again and again its betrayal of the whole idea. Indeed, it seems almost ridiculous to talk about Christianity as an influence in the direction of safeguarding human life from wanton destruction, when we think of Peter the Hermit preaching the first crusade against the Infidels of the East, of the blind Bishop of Paris riding into the battle of Agincourt with his mail-clad body lashed to his charger and his battle-axe bound to his uplifted hand, of Pope Innocent III forcing the slaughter of the Albigenian peasantry upon the unwilling soldiers of Philip Augustus, of Torquemada revelling in the monstrous horrors of the Spanish Inquisition, which is estimated to have brought death, in its most horrible forms, to no less than 350,000 men and women. Crusades, holy wars, *autos-da-fé*, persecutions, heresy hunts—these are the familiar events of Christian history, are they not? And they are the very things also, are they not, which would seem to convict Christianity, above all other organised movements that the world has ever known, of the grievous sin of inhumanity? “In the name (of this religion),” says that sober historian and literary critic, Mr. John Morley, “more human blood has been violently shed

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than in any other cause whatsoever." All this is lamentably true! And yet it must not be forgotten that the failure of the practice does not alter in the slightest degree the power and the promise of the preaching. At the bottom, the gospel of Christ emphasises nothing more clearly than this great conception of the sanctity of human life; and from this there follows no corollary more certain than that of the inviolability of human life from wanton outrage and destruction. In the beginning of its history, before the era of its worldly conversion, the apostles of this gospel lived up to this idea, at the peril always of cruel suffering and sometimes of cruel death. From that day down to our own, the world has made immeasurable progress away from the callousness and cruelty of ancient times to the quick sensitiveness and sympathy of our own. Things which were done with the cordial approval of the best men of Greece and Rome seem now so terrible as to be literally impossible. Things which are done to-day for the safeguarding of human life would have seemed to the ancients to be examples of nothing but the most preposterous kind of sentimentality. Only in such perplexing survivals as lynching, capital punishment, international warfare, is the record of attainment still incomplete. And in seeking out the various influences which have worked together for the good of this large expansion of "the quality of mercy," we shall find none, I believe, to be rightly more conspicuous than this original and persistent Christian doctrine of the sanctity of human

life. Again there comes to our minds the immortal saying of the Master, which has never been wholly forgotten or ignored even in the darkest ages of history: "It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven that even one of these little ones should perish."

Here, now, is one of the inestimable achievements which is to be credited to this sublime conception of human nature, which is so uniquely characteristic of Christianity. No sooner, however, do we realise how far the world has gone in this direction of safeguarding human life, than we are immediately tempted to wonder as to why it has not gone a good deal farther. For surely we have very little imagination if we believe that death is the only, or even the worst, violation which can be offered to the sanctity of the individual soul. For in what does the greatness and glory of the soul consist, if not in those spiritual capacities and powers which are its heritage from that divine and eternal spirit, with which it is related, to use the familiar figure of Jesus, as the branches are related to the vine? "Every human being," says Channing in his discourse on *Slavery*, "has in him the germ of the . . . idea of God; and to unfold this is the end of his existence. Every human being has in his breast the elements of that divine, everlasting law . . . of duty; and to unfold, revere, obey this, is the very purpose for which life was given. Every human being has the idea of what is meant by truth, . . . and is capable of ever-enlarging perceptions of truth. Every human being has affections, which may be purified and ex-

panded into a sublime love." "Such," says Channing, "is our nature." These are the capacities which distinguish us from the animals. These are the qualities which make us worthy to be called the sons of God. These are the things which make it possible for every man, as their possessor, to be regarded as a being of infinite worth and sanctity. And these are the very capacities, be it noted, which, because of their essentially spiritual nature, can be destroyed in far other ways than that of the mere killing of the body. To "perish" in the sense that Jesus used the word, is not merely to be cut off before the Psalmist's span of threescore years and ten has been attained. To die before one's time is by no means the most dreadful fate which one can meet. Far worse than this is to live in the purely physical sense of the term — to get up in the morning and to go to bed at night, to eat and sleep and work and strive — and yet to be denied any opportunity to fulfil those higher qualities of the spirit, the possession of which constitutes the whole of our claim to manhood. To have no chance to unfold the idea of God within the soul, to revere and obey the thought of duty, to know truth and pursue it, to receive love and bestow it, to see visions and dream dreams,

"To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield,"

to have no chance to do these things, which are the be-all and end-all of human existence, this it is to perish! And he who denies this opportunity of spiri-

tual growth and attainment to "even the least" among his fellow-beings is guilty of outraging and destroying their lives, even though he satisfies, with all a mother's tenderness for her babe, the merely material demands of physical survival. Not for nothing did Jesus say, in warning to his disciples as they set forth to preach his gospel to all the world, "Be not afraid of them that kill the body, . . . but rather fear him who is able to destroy (the) soul."

Now it is just here, in this necessary extension of the great principle of the sanctity of human life from the life of the body to the life of the soul, that Christianity has failed most conspicuously to fulfil consistently and courageously its own gospel of redemption. The most notable instance of this failure is of course to be found in the abominable institution of chattel slavery, which a true prophet of God, like John Wesley, could call nothing less than "the sum of all villanies," but which the church, in its organised capacity at least, has always excused and frequently defended. The crime of slavery was not to be found in any of the physical sufferings or perils which were involved in this system of enforced labour. The slaves might die like rats, as they undoubtedly did on the slave ships plying between Africa and the home markets, or they might be cared for and protected with the greatest consideration, as they undoubtedly were on many of the plantations in the South before the war. But the basic iniquity of slavery remained unaffected in either way. What makes this institu-

tion the most dreadful that human history has ever known and what has banished it from every remotest nook and corner of the civilised world to-day, is the fact that the ownership of one man by another denies to the first man the opportunity to live his own life, to develop his own powers, to realise the hopes and faiths of his own soul. A human being, by virtue of these very attributes of the soul which distinguish him as a human being, is plainly destined to obey a law within himself. "He was made for his own virtue and happiness." He was equipped for the fulfilment of his own desires and ambitions. He is a person and not a thing, by which we mean that he is an end in himself, and not a mere instrument or means to some other end unrelated to himself. And now are all these personal rights, which belong to a man as a moral being, stolen from him by this institution of which he is made the helpless victim. No longer can he think his own thoughts and manifest his own emotions. No longer can he gratify his own desires or seek attainment of his own ends. No longer can he have a place in the sun for the building of his own great city of the light. He cannot will, he cannot love, he cannot even lift his voice. He belongs to another, like a tool or a beast of burden. He is owned, used, and at last worn out for another's work and another's purposes. "Plainly . . . made to exercise, unfold, improve his highest powers, made for a moral and spiritual good," made to be an end in himself for the creative energy of God, he is degraded

from his high rank in the universe of the spirit, and made to serve as an instrument or means for the use of another no better than himself. Is not this "perishing" of the worst description? Could any mere physical extinction more utterly outrage and destroy a man than this life which is no life? Is not Channing right when he declares that this death in life "is the greatest violence which can be offered to any creature of God" ?

So obvious is the attack upon the sanctity of human life which is involved in the institution of slavery, that nowhere in the modern world can there be found anybody so mean as to do it reverence. But everywhere in the modern world can there be found institutions which embody exactly this same principle of reducing a man from an end in himself to a means toward some other end, which has long since made chattel slavery so odious. All around us men are perishing not in body but in soul, because of the stupidity, the selfishness, the injustice of individual men or of social systems.

Take, for example, our whole method of handling prisoners and prisons! Here is a man who comes before a court for trial for some offence against the law. The very fact that he is here in the dock proves that he is ignorant, and needs instruction; or that he is physically diseased or mentally deficient, and needs individual attention; or that he has faults of temper, and needs moral correction; or that he is the victim of a bad environment, and needs the uplifting influences

of good surroundings. Instead of diagnosing his case as we would diagnose the case of any applicant at the clinic of a hospital, we put this man on trial from the standpoint not of his condition but of the facts of his wrongdoing; and then, if he be declared guilty, we at once proceed to rob him of all the rights and privileges of his manhood by shutting him up in a cage like a wild beast and chaining him to a work-bench like a slave. From the moment he enters the walls of the prison, to which he is doomed, he ceases to be an end in himself and becomes a means to some other end which he does not see and cannot understand. He is stripped of his outward marks of personal identification so effectively that, for example, when Mr. Thomas Mott Osborne went to Auburn Prison for a week, he was twice able to pass the inspection of some of his closest friends and associates without being recognised. He is denied all the ordinary and necessary expressions of personality — he cannot talk, suggest ideas, write a letter or receive a letter save at inhuman intervals, take spontaneous exercise in the open air, make friendships and pledge loyalties. He is robbed of all privileges of personal convenience and habit, and ruthlessly fitted into the unvarying routine of a prescribed system of life. In his eating, sleeping, waking, walking, working, he is reduced to the condition of a mere automaton. He labours, but it is for the state without decent recompense or reward. He breathes, but it is at the convenience and on the terms of the warden and his officers. We take the offender,



who is shown by his crime to be lacking in certain essential qualities of character, and then, instead of nourishing the few qualities that he has, and adding to them others that he knows not of by judicious and humane processes of education, scientific training, and personal influence, we proceed to do all we can to destroy the few rags and tatters of personal initiative, moral freedom, and spiritual idealism that still show him to be a man. We strip him of the inherent right of his God-given manhood to be regarded and treated as a divinely precious end in himself, and we reduce him to the degrading position of being a means to the attainment of our profit, our security, and our peculiar whims of right and wrong—with the result pointed out by Oscar Wilde in unforgettable phrase in his *Ballad of Reading Gaol*:

“The vilest deeds, like prison weeds,  
Bloom well in prison air,  
It is only what is good in Man  
That wastes and withers there.”

Again, as another illustration of this violation of the sanctity of the individual soul by degrading a man to the position of a mere instrument or tool, take the present system of industry which prevails the world around. There was a time, and it was not so very long ago as centuries are numbered, that a workman could find in his handiwork food for his soul and joy for his heart. This article which he produced was a permanent monument to the skill of his hands and

the fertility of his brain. It was *his* in the sense that the canvas was the painter's and the statue was the sculptor's. It might be the humblest object imaginable — a shoe, a coat, a chair, a table-spoon — but into it went his life, and through it was his "apology" spoken to the world. Those were the days when humble builders made the cathedral at Rheims, when unknown wood-carvers reared the Hôtel de Ville at Louvain, when forgotten weavers produced the tapestries of France. Those were the days when Hans Sachs sang his Meister-songs as he cobbled at his bench, when Josiah Wedgewood won immortality in his pottery, and Robert Collyer smote with joy the glowing horseshoe upon his anvil.

But all this has now gone by with the coming of the factory and the establishment of the wage system of employment. To-day the typical worker rises at the blowing of the factory whistle — trudges to his place by the great machine, where he makes some thousandth part of a finished article which he never sees — toils amid dirt and noise through nine or ten hours of the weary day — and then at the fall of darkness takes himself homeward to his wretched tenement, exhausted and dispirited. On Saturday night he counts over his wages, and finds just enough money to keep rude fare upon his table and a roof over the heads of himself and his family, with scarce a penny over for recreation, the visitation of illness, or the long weeks of unemployment. Day in and day out, year in and year out, he labours at his monotonous and soul-killing

task, until old age reduces him to pauperism or the care of his overburdened children, and death at last releases him from the prison chamber of the world. Thus do tens and hundreds of thousands of men and women spend their days—mere cogs in the great machines of industry, mere tools for the doing of the work from which other men make their profits, mere instruments or means for the realisation of that remote end of creating and piling up wealth, of which they are forever forbidden to have a share. It is amusing to talk of slavery being dead—as though the marks of slavery were the chain-gang, the auction-block, the overseer's whip. Slavery exists wherever men are bound to tasks which are not their own, wherever they receive no equable share of the wealth which they create, wherever they go and come, sleep and wake, are employed or unemployed, according as another man may decide. Look at the thousands of little children who labour every day in mine and factory, at the cost of health, knowledge, and sound morals—look at the hundreds of thousands of women who rush to the sweatshops, in order that their homes may not be snatched from them and their children starved—look at the millions of men who labour for a lifetime and never have a piece of handicraft or even a piece of money to keep as their reward. How many of these multitudes of workers are living their lives as they would like to live them? How many of them are satisfying any of the hunger of their hearts or reaching to any of the visions of their souls? How many of

them are "ends" in the sense defined by Channing that they fulfil "the fundamental law of (human) nature that all (their) powers are to be improved by free exertion"? Are they not all slaves and puppets and beasts of burden? Are they not all living a life which spiritually is death? Are they not all being sacrificed as means to such extra-human ends as business, profits, industrial prosperity, wealth? We think it terrible when we look back to the days of Greece and Rome, that Plato could commend infanticide, and Aristotle abortion, and Pliny the gladiatorial games. But as sure as progress is progress, and enlightenment enlightenment, that day is coming when our descendants will look back upon these days and marvel that we could not see the abomination of the industrial conditions of wage-hire!

And right here, let me point out, in this fundamental distinction between man as an end and man as a means, do we also find what will some day be recognised as the unanswerable indictment of war as a method of settling disputes between the nations of the world. That men are slaughtered on the battlefield is not the first nor yet the last argument against war. This phase of the tragedy is terrible, of course. But there has never been a time when men have not been willing to die for the sake of some great cause, and death under such circumstances is as easy as well as a glorious thing.

What makes war horrible and, as I would put it, inexcusable, is the gathering up of unnumbered mil-

lions of men, by tyrants who have dynastic ends to serve or governments which have foolish and immoral alliances to maintain, and the hurling of them into the battle like so much shot and shell, without asking their consent and for the sake of no cause with which they can have the slightest connection. That men should serve as so many swords in the hands of kings in the days when infanticide was practised and captives slain in cold blood, is understandable. But that men should be similarly degraded to a level with guns and bayonets in this enlightened age, well-nigh passes comprehension. And yet it is only sober truth to say that this kind of degradation is more universal in our time than even in the darkest days of Rome and the Middle Ages. Think of the systems of conscription in vogue for a generation past in Germany, France, Russia, and Austria, which have forced grown men to leave their places in the university, or at the workbench, or in the home, and prostitute themselves to two or three years of marching on the drilling fields and standing guard in the barracks! Think of the system which made it possible for the governors of the European nations to call every man to the colours on the first days of August, 1914, and fire them into the battle with as little consideration as you would feel in firing a bullet from your musket. Right here is the crowning indictment of war as it is being fought to-day — that men are degraded to the position of mere instruments to serve the pride of kings and repair the blunders of statesmen — that they are

reduced to the level of mere shot and shell — that they are torn from their families, robbed of their brains, stiffened up like ramrods, decked out in the sham finery of uniforms, tied to their fellows by the bonds of discipline as puppets are tied together by leading strings, and thus manufactured into a war-machine at the cost of every human capacity that makes them to be men and not things. Whether a soldier is slain in battle or survives, is of little moment, from this point of view of the essential sanctity of his spirit. The thing to be noted is that he has been robbed of his manhood, that he has perished as a human being, an immortal son of God, long before his carcass has been shot to pieces in the trenches.

And so the illustrations of our modern violations of the sanctity of human life might be multiplied. But surely my point must by now be clear. Does it not all come down to the simple fact that we have a perverted viewpoint — that we are still in the position of the old Romans of recognising certain ends as more important than certain men, and of feeling justified therefore in sacrificing human life to these ends as the ancients sacrificed meat to idols? We do not kill men, to be sure. Our way is more refined — we simply use them as tools or weapons. But the result is exactly the same. Property, social discipline, pleasure, convenience, national interest, royal pride, these are exalted as the chief ends of existence, and man is degraded as a mere means for the attainment of these ends. The body, in accordance with our greater ten-

derness these days, is saved from destruction, but the soul is slaughtered without compunction. The perishing, in other words, which Jesus said it was not the will of our Father which is in heaven that "even the least" of men should suffer, still goes on!

Hence the need of a deeper understanding of the Christian Gospel, and a more consistent application of its ideals. Hence the need of a spiritual awakening which will teach us to safeguard human life from being *used*, as early Christianity taught the Romans to safeguard human life from being killed. At the heart of it all is the necessity of learning that life is alone sacred — that the only thing that matters in this world is the soul — that man must be exalted and served even though all else be denied or perish. We can spare wealth, property, nations, but we cannot spare men. From the least even unto the greatest, they must be saved!

The truth that I would convey is beautifully expressed in the story of David and the well of Bethlehem. This well was in the hands of the Philistines. Overhearing King David express a wish for some water from the fountain, "three mighty men broke through the host of the Philistines, drew water out of the well, and brought it to David," that he might drink. But David, we are told, would not touch it, for to do so would be to confess that he had a right to use these men as the instruments of his pleasure — as means to the service of his ends. "Shall I drink the blood of men?" he asked. And he gave answer by pouring out the water upon the ground.

## THE GOD OF BATTLES, OR THE RELIGION OF WAR

**THERE** is no circumstance of the Great War in Europe which is more interesting than the fact that, in all the various countries involved, the organised forces of religion are actively engaged in the prosecution of the conflict. It is not too much to say that this war is in many ways a religious war. Go into any of the churches on a Sunday morning, in England, Germany, or France, and you will be asked to join in fervent prayers for the triumph of the national armies in the field, and of course, as a natural consequence, for the defeat and destruction of the armies of the enemy. Go into some of these churches as in England for example, and you will find the parish houses turned into munition factories, and the boys and girls busily at work, under the leadership of their ministers, in making weapons for the soldiers. Go to the front, as in Russia for example, and there you will see at the head of every regiment, as it advances into battle, a priest of the church, bearing a crucifix in one hand and an ikon in the other. Especially in Germany have the practices of religion been made an important function of the military life. Every Sunday the soldiers are marshalled in the churches, or if necessary in the open fields, for formal services of worship. Every morning and evening, in barracks and in camp, prayers are solemnly read by officers or



chaplains. Each soldier is carefully provided with a little handbook of private devotions. And when altogether they march into battle, the psalms of Luther are on their lips and the God of the Fatherland is in their hearts. Certainly, in so far as religion can be made to take its place and play its part as a vital factor in a great war, it is not failing to do so in this present conflict. From pleas of national defence and self-preservation, the Great War in the early days very rapidly swept on to the justification of lofty principles of liberty, democracy, and brotherhood. And now, in these later stages of the strife, it has advanced to the out-and-out basis of religious idealism. Saints are appearing on the battlefield; miracles are being worked by the spirits of the unforgotten dead; Jesus is being hailed as the friend of violence; and God everywhere invoked as the inspirer and guardian of the faithful. Religion is in the air. The cross, like the crescent, is the symbol of bloodshed and conquest. Not since the crusaders marshalled their hosts at the call of Peter the Hermit, and marched away in the name of God to wrest the Holy Sepulchre from the profaning hand of the Infidel, has the world been called upon to witness so startling a manifestation of spiritual enthusiasm in the field of war.

Now to many persons this identification of religion with the dread work of destruction and death which is now proceeding in Europe, is a fact which goes far toward relieving the situation of its horror. Some persons, indeed, are so impressed with the religious

character of the war, that they have been tempted to regard the conflict as primarily a blessing and not a curse. It was from this point of view that one of my colleagues in New York, last year, described the war as the greatest blessing that the world has seen since the Protestant Reformation. It was from this same point of view that another of my colleagues, at a somewhat later time, pictured the event as a supreme instance of good and not of ill. Prior to the outbreak of hostilities, these ministers argue, the world was given over to the cult of materialism. The old motives were forgotten, the old standards neglected, the old ideals lost. The lust of wealth, the indulgence of the flesh, the pursuit of pleasure and ease — these were the chief ends of man in the first decade of the present century. And coupled with these ends was an indifference to fundamentals, a contempt of ancient sanctities, which threatened a rapid dissolution of the intellectual and spiritual integrity of the race. Then, with the shock of an earthquake, came the war — and men awoke once again to the realities which they had so long forgotten or defied. Life all at once was plunged into depths which it had not sounded for generations. At the same time was it lifted to heights which the souls of living men had never seen, and much less scaled. The ordinary business of existence became suddenly trivial — the ordinary possessions of men's hands of no concern. The peril that rode on every wind, the death that walked on every street, the sorrow that knocked on every door — these were the things that counted! And, behold!

as by some new and strange baptism of the spirit, men remembered God, and turned to him with one accord for guidance and protection. The very horror of this war, we are being told on every hand, has brought its certain compensation in a rebirth of the religious consciousness. The souls of men, after far wanderings in the wilderness of materialism, have found Sinai, and seek again the holy presence which comes only in the flame of lightning and the crash of thunder.

Now that there is much truth in this interpretation of the European situation, goes without saying. Millions of men and women, in all the belligerent countries, are undoubtedly living more deeply and certainly more terribly than they have ever lived before. Thousands of men and women are facing reality for the first time, and by this experience being moved to unfamiliar emotion and activity. But to identify this awakening of the human spirit, under the dreadful stimulus of war, with religion in the true sense of that word, and to declare that in the agony and passion which are now tearing the souls of men in France, Belgium, Germany and Russia, we see a genuine expression of the spiritual life, is to my mind an opinion which is as preposterous as it is cruel. That there *is* a religion of war, I have no doubt. That this religion of war has been stirred within men's hearts to-day as it has not been stirred in many centuries, I am reasonably certain. But that this religion has anything to do with the religion of Jesus and his fellow-prophets — that it has any connection with the spiritual idealism

which is the end and aim of our faltering endeavours in times of peace — that it is a renaissance of the soul which is to be welcomed as a blessing to mankind — all this I would most emphatically deny. In the prayers and praises of this war, we see not the sudden overthrow of the materialism, immorality, indulgence of the peaceful years preceding the great cataclysm. On the contrary, in the blindness of these prayers, in the madness of these praises, we see the triumph and apotheosis of this very corruption of the spirit which we have so long been deploring. This war marks not the recovery of men's souls, but their collapse. It shows not the revival but the loss of religion. It means not the discovery but the abandonment of God. Men are calling upon God, to be sure, as they have not called for generations. But it is the God of Battles whom they seek. And this God of Battles, let me tell you, is a deity who is as alien to true religion as that other pagan monster known as Mammon, whose worship by mankind has for so long been the despair and degradation of our times.

In order to see how different is this religion of war from all that we imply by religion in the accurate meaning of that great word, let us compare the spiritual ideas and ideals of men to-day, as they live under the stress and strain of battle, with these same ideas and ideals as they appear in the normal experiences of men, and especially as they have been built up in the dreams and visions of the great prophets of the race.

Take, in the first place, our idea of God! At the

very heart of this idea lies the conception of a deity who is the universal Father of mankind. Very clear in the minds of men, for ages past, has been the thought of God as an all-pervasive presence in the physical universe. "Whither shall I go from thy spirit," asks the Psalmist, in one of the noblest religious poems ever conceived by the human mind, "or whither shall I flee from thy presence. If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in the grave, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me." There was a time when different gods, not only for every country, but every mountain, every river, every tree, occupied the imaginations of men's hearts. But little by little these multitudinous deities were all merged into the one God whose presence is as high as heaven, as deep as hell, and as wide as the swinging orbits of the stars. And along with this conception of the one God of a universal creation has come as well the twin conception of the one Father of a universal humanity. Men stand before many altars, and offer many prayers in many languages. Their practices of worship are as different as their habits of daily life. If names are to be trusted, a new god, like a new king, must be recognised and worshipped with the crossing of every boundary line between land and land. But names and prayers and ceremonies we know to be mere illusions. In the hearts of men, as in the wide spaces of the heavens, there is but one God, and to him and him alone are

offered the prayers of northern Esquimaux and southern black, of Chinese and Indian, of Teuton and Slav. St. Paul has given immortal expression to this supreme idea of one universal deity, in his letter to the Ephesians, where he speaks of "one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all."

Now this idea of the "one God and Father of all," which constitutes the essence of what we mean by religion in its best and highest estate, is the very idea which finds no place in the religion of war. The universal Father, who is so near to all our hearts in the blessed days of "peace on earth, goodwill toward men," disappears when the call to arms is sounded; and in his place appears the dread God of Battles. Nay, there appears not one God but many gods — for this God of Battles, let it be noted with all care, has as many different persons as there are different countries engaged in the strife of war. Such conflict as is now being waged in Europe, in other words, means not only a loss of all that we mean by the great doctrine of the Fatherhood of God, but an immediate reversion to the swarming polytheisms of the ancient days of barbarism. Nobody can look at Germany and Russia and France at this moment, for example, without seeing in the religious life of these contending nations a recrudescence of those various tribal deities which once characterised the religious faiths of men. Just as Jehovah, in the history of Israel, was the God not of men in general but of the Israelites in particular, and every nation against which

the Israelites waged war had its own particular deity, like Dagon of the Philistines, Chemosh of the Moabites, Bel of the Babylonians, so the God worshipped by the French, we will say, is the God not of humanity but of France, and the enemies whom France is fighting are serving other and alien gods. Each nation, to be sure, pretends to be worshipping the "one God and Father of all"—there is no open recognition of a distinctively national or tribal deity. "All pray to the same God," said Abraham Lincoln, in his Second Inaugural Address; "the prayers of both cannot be answered." But the point to be noted is, that each nation approaches God and prays to God, as though God were its own peculiar possession, and had its interests and not the interests of humanity very particularly at heart. All of which means, as a matter of fact, that the one God and Father of men has been lost from out men's hearts, and in his place has appeared a throng of deities, each one of which is the enemy of all the others! There is war in heaven, as well as on the earth. The Germans, as the most thorough-going of all the belligerent peoples, give us the clearest idea of this reversion, under the degrading stimulus of war, to the worship of tribal gods. They seem to believe, with an astonishing kind of consistency, that they have a monopoly of God—that God is limiting his love and guardianship to the German people—that God has set up the Kaiser as a kind of vice-regent of the Most High to conquer and rule the world. This is certainly the view of Wilhelm II, if not of all his subjects. "We Hohenzollerns," he

has said more than once, "take our crown from God. On me the spirit of God has descended. I regard my whole task . . . as appointed by heaven. Who opposes me I shall crush to pieces. Remember that the German people are the chosen of God." No other country of our time has given, nor do I believe would be able to give, so bare-faced and shameless a confession of tribal worship as this from the lips of the Prussian King; and yet, within very definite limitations, what is true of the Germans in this regard is true of all the peoples against whom the Germans are contending. The religion of war has banished from his throne within the human heart the universal "God, the Father," and placed in his stead the God of Battles, who is as numerous, as I have said, as the nations which are in arms. At one fell swoop, we are back in the days of Saul, when Samuel, the prophet of the Lord, revealed unto the king of Israel the word of Jehovah, "Go and smite Amalek and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass."

In the second place, as another fundamental conception of true religion, take that idea of the universal Brotherhood of Man, which follows as an immediate and inevitable corollary upon the idea of the universal Fatherhood of God. It is no accident that the same great teacher and apostle of religion who affirmed the existence of the "one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all," also declared



that "God hath made of one blood all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth." These two things inevitably go together, for if God is one, then man, as the son of God, is also one. His spiritual kinship with the source of life makes distinctions and separations between races and religions, nationalities and classes, forevermore impossible. The important thing about a man is not that he is white, or Christian, or German, or Caucasian, nor yet that he is black, or Mohammedan, or Japanese, or Mongolian. The important thing about a man is that he is a man — that he has a soul within his body, which is akin to the souls of other men — and that he is a member therefore of a human family which is as inclusive as the population of earth. More and more clearly, with passing time and mounting progress, has this idea of the unity of mankind, which is what we mean by the great word, humanity, been made manifest to our hearts. More and more surely, under the influence of this idea, have racial prejudices, national hostilities, class jealousies, been disappearing. And behind all that has been seen and gained, is the faith of religion that men are at bottom sons of God, who find their essential unity in the oneness of his holy spirit, and therefore brothers one of another.

And now comes the Great War, and with it a religion of war which denies the fact of brotherhood, and divides men once again into warring camps! Men are no longer primarily men; they are first of all Germans, or Russians, or Frenchmen. Men are no longer living

in a world of men; rather are they citizens of England or Austria or Italy, owing no loyalty or love to any, but their fellow-countrymen. Men are no longer brothers in origin, character and destiny; on the contrary, they are enemies, who seek to rise by another's fall, and live at the price of another's death. Everywhere throughout Europe, where wars have been declared and rumours of war are heard, is the supreme idea of spiritual unity lost in the nearer idea of national diversity, and all the realm of brotherhood contracted within the narrow sphere of boundary lines between state and state. It is to the Germans again that we have to go for a perfectly logical statement of this principle. Thus General Bernhardt, speaking in his famous book on *Germany and the Next War*, of the relation between Christianity and warfare, takes pains to point out that the precepts of the religion of Jesus can be applied only to the relations existing between men who are citizens of the same country, and not at all to the relations existing between citizens of different countries. International war is entirely consistent with Christianity, for the reason that Christianity is intended to be practised only within, and not across, the borders of a state. "Christian morality," says the General, in his opening chapter, "is based, indeed, on the law of love . . . (But) this law can claim no significance from the relations of one country to another. . . . Christian morality is personal and social, and in its nature cannot be political. Its object is to promote morality of the individual, in order to strengthen him to work unselfishly

in the interests of the community." Which, being interpreted means, that every sentiment of brotherhood, every ideal of spiritual kinship, must be confined to the individuals within the nations, and never extend beyond the borders of one's native land. The Jews can have no dealings with the Samaritans.

Nor is this any mere counsel of perfection. On the contrary, the very moment that war is declared, how are all relations of amity and goodwill suspended between the citizens of the belligerent countries! The Englishman is under no further obligation to be courteous and helpful to the German, nor the German to the Englishman. The Frenchman caught in Germany or the German in France, after war is declared, is immediately an object of suspicion, and is sooner or later arrested and confined as a common criminal in a concentration camp. French women of culture and sympathy, invited to attend the Women's Peace Congress at The Hague, reply with scorn, "How would it be possible, in an hour like this, for us to meet women of the enemy's country?" An English nurse, living in a country conquered and controlled by the Germans, is caught serving the interests of the wounded soldiers of her country, out of sheer sympathy for weakness and distress, and is shot to death as though she were guilty of some unpardonable sin. In an instant, as though blood had been poisoned, former neighbours are transformed into enemies, and old friends into mortal foes. Acts which would constitute outrageous offences in times of peace, now under the influence of the religion of war, become strangely

credible. Says a traveller in France in the days immediately preceding the outbreak of the great war between the nations, "In time we reached Belfort (where) train after train kept pouring in from all parts of France with passengers bound for Switzerland. . . . They were mostly Germans hastening out of France. To remain in France longer was dangerous, for the war fever was spreading, and that meant that friendly men would soon become beasts, and no German's life would be secure. . . . The French had been kindly the night before, but now the kindliness had changed into a wild rage against Germans. It began to be noticeable at Belfort, and even German women and babies were liable to violence and insult. War in our days knows no manners, no humanity, no religion. . . . It was only the day before in a café in Paris that I heard a Frenchman say that he would like to have the job of splitting every German baby in two with a sword." Thus does the religion of war make brotherhood a sin, and the conception of humanity a mockery and sham. It is the universal verdict of centuries of criticism, that the story of the Good Samaritan is the crowning expression of the religious ideal. But from the standpoint of war and its obligations, it is plain that this parable must yield place to the tale of Samuel, hewing Agag into pieces before the Lord.

Again, take the whole conception of love, which most of us accept as the practical expression of all that we mean by religion. How does this word shine upon the pages of the Bible, how does it leap from the lips of the holy prophets which have been since the world began,

how does it come as the "living water" to those who would drink and never thirst again! The whole meaning of his gospel Jesus sums up in the two great commandments of love—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and all thy soul and all thy mind and all thy strength, and thy neighbour as thyself." The whole content of his message, St. Paul sets forth under the terms of faith and hope and love, and "the greatest of these," he declares, "is love." And finally, as the perfect expression of the Christian religion, we have the words of St. John, "If we love one another, God abideth in us, and his love is perfected in us. For God is love; and he that abideth in love abideth in God, and God in him. If any man say, I love God, yet hateth his brother, how dwelleth the love of God in him? For he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he hath not seen." Turn to any of the great prophets of religion in ancient or in modern times, and I venture to say that love is the one word which they would choose as most adequately and completely carrying the burden of their cry. Study the lives of men, from the standpoint of spiritual perfection, and I have no doubt that we would all of us apply the famous test of Abou ben Adhem, who was blessed of God because he loved his fellow men. St. Paul summed it all up for all time, when he affirmed that "love is the fulfilling of the law."

Love, therefore, must be taken in the truest sense of the word, as a basic factor, perhaps the one basic factor, of the practical religious life. That is, if we



understand the religious life as it is commonly understood by normal men under normal conditions of existence! But not so with the religion of war! For here, strange as it may seem, it suddenly becomes our duty not to love, but to hate, not to serve but to kill, not to cherish but to destroy. The best illustration of this fact is seen in that ghastly product of the war-literature of the past year, known as the Hymns of Hate. Most of us associate these hymns with Germany, because of that stupendously virulent poem of Lissauer, which went round the world in a single week. No one of us was left unacquainted with the terrific lines, wherein the German poet chanted the hatred of his people for the people of England:

“Come, let us stand at the Judgment place,  
An oath to swear to, face to face,  
An oath of bronze no wind can shake,  
An oath for our sons and their sons to take.  
Come, hear the word, repeat the word,  
Throughout the Fatherland make it heard.  
We will never forego our hate . . .  
We have all but a single hate . . .  
French and Russian, they matter not,  
A blow for a blow, a shot for a shot,  
We fight the battle with bronze and steel,  
And the time that is coming Peace will seal.  
You will we hate with a lasting hate,  
We will never forego our hate.  
Hate by water and hate by land,  
Hate of the head and hate of the hand,  
Hate of the hammer and hate of the crown,  
Hate of millions, choking down.

We love as one, we hate as one,  
We have one foe, and one alone —  
England!"

Certainly the war has produced nothing more appalling than this passionate outburst of revenge. But it is only fair, in justice to Germany and all concerned, that we should not forget that other nations in this great struggle have produced Hymns of Hate, which are only less terrible than this of the German poet because their writers have not the genius of Lissauer. Indeed it is considerable of a commentary on the boasted fairness of our newspaper press, that this German "Hymn" has been dinned into our ears until they are wellnigh paralysed, while other hymns of the same character, produced by the Allies, have been left to fall into oblivion. How many of us remember, for example, the hideous song of hate against Germany which was chanted by William Watson, of England, in the early days of the war? And how many of us have ever heard at all of that dreadful poem of Henri de Regnier, of France, which is worse than the Lissauer "Hymn" to the extent that it is not merely a summons, but a pledge. Let me read it to you, and, as I read, ask yourselves what you would have thought of it, if it had come not from France but from Germany. It is called *The Oath*, and reads as follows:

"I swear to cherish in my heart this hate  
Till my last heart-throb wanes;  
So may the sacred venom of my blood  
Mingle and charge my veins!

May there pass never from my darkened brow  
The furrows hate has worn!  
May they plough deeper in my flesh, to mark  
The outrage I have borne!

By towns in flames, by my fair fields laid waste,  
By hostages undone,  
By cries of murdered women and of babes,  
By each dead warrior son, . . .

I take my oath of hatred and of wrath  
Before God, and before  
The holy waters of the Marne and Aisne,  
Still ruddy with French gore;

And fix my eyes upon immortal Rheims,  
Burning from nave to porch,  
Lest I forget, lest I forget who lit  
The sacrilegious torch!"

No man, I believe, can look upon stricken France, after two years and more of dreadful war, without feeling his blood tingle at these lines of hate. There is more reason, infinitely more reason, for this "Hymn" than for the barbarous "Hymn" of Lissauer. And yet one has but to contrast these lines, "Lest I forget," with Jesus's cry "Forgive them, Father," to understand something at least of the difference between the religion of peace and the religion of war.

Not all, however, of our story has yet been told. There still remains to be considered for a moment that aspect of religion which is known as the moral law. In every religious system, of which we have any knowledge,



there has developed out of long trial and experience a body or code of individual and social morality, which has been accepted by men as the guide of conduct and the standard of character. From the theological point of view, this code of ethical law has been interpreted to men's minds as a revelation of the will of God. From the psychological point of view, it has been interpreted as a reflection of man's inward experiences of happiness and distress. From the sociological point of view, it has appeared as an embodiment of the wisdom which the race has accumulated through many ages as the result of prosperity and disaster, of victory and defeat. Whether we accept one theory of this origin of the moral law or another, it still remains true that man finds himself in possession of a careful formulation of things which are right and things which are wrong, that man receives and holds this formulation as a law which may be violated only at the peril of salvation, and that man recognises behind this formulation a divine command or will which gives to it its ultimate and perfect sanction. Hence the precepts of Confucius, the truths or paths of Buddha, the suras of Mohammed, the commandments of Moses, the Golden Rule and the Beatitudes of Jesus! These moral laws are the teachings of different men, they come down to us from different periods of history, they set forth the aspirations and principles of widely-separated peoples and civilisations. But in spite of all diversity of origin and character, there is underlying them all a certain uniformity of idea which constitutes one of the most remarkable facts of

history. Running through all ages and all nations, are these great ideals of conduct, these great laws of right and wrong, which vary as little as the light which shines from one star to another. Thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness, thou shalt not covet — these are the commandments which characterise not merely the religion of Israel but the religion of men everywhere. All experience shows the wrongness of these sins. Every mind revolts from the iniquity of these offences. Or, speaking finally in religious terms, all men have heard within their souls the word of God speaking these commands of good and evil. The world is at bottom moral and not merely material. The stars are swayed not merely by physical but by spiritual forces. As Emerson puts it, in immortal verse:

“ Out of the heart of nature rolled  
The burdens of the Bible old;  
The litanies of nations came,  
Like the volcano's tongue of flame,  
Up from the burning core below  
The canticles of love and woe.”

Now the remarkable thing about the religion of war — the one final testimony to the truth which I am most anxious to impress upon your minds — is the fact that this so-called religion exactly reverses all the precepts of right and wrong which have come to man from the universal conscience of the race, or from the central mind and will of God, and lays upon his startled soul the grim command to make evil henceforward his good.

The ethical code of the soldier, that is to say, is the precise opposite of the ordinary ethical code of the ordinary man under ordinary conditions. It is the soldier's duty to steal — steal and destroy anything that belongs to the enemy and can serve in any conceivable way the interests of the enemy. It is the soldier's duty to bear false witness — to tell a lie on every occasion when the enemy may be deceived and thereby led astray. It is the soldier's duty to kill — to commit murder by wholesale for the destruction of the enemy and the furtherance of his own cause. These dreadful crimes, be it noted, are not laid upon the soldier as possibilities, or alternatives, or examples of better or worse. They are commands, imperatives, duties — obligations as insistent as any of the ten tables of the law. The soldier must be a thief, a liar, a murderer, else is he not a soldier. These are the laws of war, as the other and more beneficent laws are laws of peace — and these laws must be obeyed as truly in the one case as in the other. The God of Battles, in other words, is a God who is served by deceit, violence, dishonour, cruelty, lust, murder. All of which means that he is not God at all, but the Devil! For do you remember how John Milton makes his lordly Satan talk, when the fallen angel has been cast out of heaven, and lies prostrate in the depths of hell? These are the words of "the Arch-Fiend," as set down in *Paradise Lost* —

" Fallen Cherub, to be weak is miserable,  
Doing or suffering: but of this be sure

To do aught good never will be our task,  
But ever to do ill our sole delight,  
As being the contrary to His high will  
Whom we resist . . .  
Farewell remorse! All good to me is lost;  
Evil, be thou my Good."

Here, now, are some of the things which distinguish the religion of war from religion as we ordinarily know and practise it. In the place of the "one God and Father of all," it gives us a world of many gods. In place of the great brotherhood of man, it gives us a human family divided into warring clans and hostile tribes. In place of love, it gives us hate, as "the greatest thing in the world." And in place of good, it gives us evil as the law of the Most High. We only have to study such contrasts as these for a moment, I believe, to understand that, in spite of the devotion of churches and the enthusiasm of priests, the religion of war, as a plain matter of fact, is not religion in the true sense of the word at all. Religion has to do with God, the Father of men, whose will is love and whose work is good. The religion of war, on the contrary, as Milton so clearly reveals, has to do with Satan, "the Adversary" of men, whose will is hate and whose work is evil. Which brings me, by still another line of approach, to that doctrine which is the supreme conviction of my life these days, that religious men, Christian men, cannot have anything to do with war! For it is the business of religionists, of Christians, to "have no other God" before God, to "live at peace with all men," to "love one

another," to obey the moral law. And these are the very things, please note, which they cannot do in time of war.

Therefore do I come in conclusion to that dilemma which I have presented so many times before — the choice between religion and war, between Christ and Cæsar, between the God of Love and the God of Battles. One of these, and not both, must we choose. For "no man can serve two masters; either he will hate the one and love the other; or else he will hold to the one and despise the other." And oh, as we value our own souls and the souls of all men everywhere, let us be careful how we choose, for as we choose, so, we may be sure, shall we also live.

"As (our) gods (are), so (our) laws (are); Thor the strong could reave and steal,  
So through many a peaceful inlet tore the Norseman's eager keel;  
But a new law came when Christ came, and not blameless, as before,  
Can we, paying him our lip-tithes, give our lives and faiths to Thor."

## IS CHRISTIANITY A FAILURE? <sup>1</sup>

I AM profoundly moved as I stand in my familiar place this morning, and think of all that has occurred in the world of human affairs since last we met together. It was only a few weeks ago that I was preaching to you in confidence and good cheer, the eternal gospel of peace on earth, goodwill toward men. At that time there was peace on earth, and so far as we could see there was goodwill toward men. To be sure, there was a serious revolution under way in Mexico; there were rumours of trouble in the Balkans, as there have always been rumours of trouble in that particular portion of Europe; and we were told that civil war was threatening in Ulster over the passage of the Irish Home Rule Bill. It is also to be remembered that Europe was an armed camp from end to end, just as she has ever been since the Congress of Berlin. But over the great nations of the world, as over some country hillside on a hot afternoon of mid-July, there brooded peace. Business and pleasure were alike following their accustomed activities in England, France, Germany and Russia. Our friends and kinsmen journeyed across the seas by the thousands, to visit cathedrals, museums, and familiar playgrounds, as they had done every summer for more than a generation past. And as the crown-

<sup>1</sup> The first sermon preached in the Messiah pulpit after the outbreak of the Great War.

ing events of the European holiday, there had been arranged two international peace conferences — one in the city of Constance, and another in the city of Vienna.

To-day, however, with a suddenness and a completeness which are absolutely incredible, the entire situation has been changed. In place of peace, we have war; in place of goodwill among men, we witness the greatest orgy of hatred, lust, and strife that the history of the world has ever known. Europe is no longer merely an armed camp, but, from the Baltic to the Mediterranean, from the Atlantic Ocean to the Caucasus Mountains, is become a battlefield. From twenty to twenty-five millions of men are at this moment under arms. From one million and a half to two millions of men are locked in mortal combat on the plains of northern France. The losses of property and of men are already so great that no one has been able to estimate them. In the battle of the Marne alone, if conservative figures can be trusted, thirty times as many men were killed and wounded as at the battle of Jena, twelve times as many as at the battle of Austerlitz, and five times as many as at the battle of Gettysburg, the greatest conflict of the nineteenth century. And this was but one battle on one corner of the widely-extended field of combat, and in itself but the beginning of the struggle. Already we have heard of horrors too stupendous even to be understood; and the next gale that sweeps from the marshes of east Prussia, or the waste lands of Galicia, or the smiling vineyards of France, may easily bring to our ears news infinitely worse than anything that we yet have heard.



What will happen to-morrow morning, what the outcome of it all will be, what will be left when the last gun has been fired and the last soldier slain, no man can say! But that we are witnessing the greatest war since the passing of Napoleon, confronting the most complete and universal upheaval of ordered life since the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, facing the largest losses of blood and treasure that mankind has ever endured — all this is absolutely certain!

A thousand questions of the first importance have been raised by this sudden convulsion which has seized upon our modern world — no one of them so vital or so embarrassing, at least from our particular point of view, as that relating to Christianity. Do we not have here, it is being said on every side by Christians and non-Christians alike, a final and perfect demonstration of the failure of the Christian religion? Here has Christianity been preaching its gospel of peace and goodwill for nineteen hundred years. For sixteen hundred of these years at least, the Christian church has been the mightiest organised power for good or ill that humanity has known. To-day it represents, all things considered, the largest, wealthiest, most widely extended and deeply rooted institution in the world. Seven of the eight nations now engaged <sup>1</sup> in the struggle for armed supremacy are nominally Christian. Five at least of these nations support great ecclesiastical establishments for the propagation of the religion of Jesus, as a regular part of the machinery of government. In two of these na-

<sup>1</sup> September, 1914.



tions, the head of the state is at the same time the head of the church, and the official representative therefore of Christ and the custodian of his gospel. It is amid such professions and conditions of adherence to his person and to his church, that we see the world of Christendom plunged into a war of such barbaric fury as even the so-called world of paganism has never equaled! Nineteen hundred years of preaching and praying, of martyrdom and sacrifice — and this is the result! Nineteen hundred years of scholars giving of their learning, priests of their devotion, kings of their power, the multitudes of their hard-earned substance — and to no other end but this! What wonder that an acute observer and valiant prophet, like Mr. H. G. Wells, is moved to assert, at this crisis of human agony, that he finds it “an extraordinary thing to go now and look at one’s parish church and note the pulpit, the orderly arrangement for the hearers, the proclamations on the doors, to sit awhile on the stone wall about the graves and survey the comfortable vicarage, and to reflect that this is just the local representation of a universally present organisation for the communication of ideas, that all over Europe there are such pulpits and such possibilities of gathering, and seeing that they gather nothing and (accomplish nothing).”

It would be foolish to blind our eyes to the fact that Christianity is facing to-day the most serious crisis of its history. The question as to the failure of Christianity, to be sure, has been asked many times before this. It has been asked again and again, for example, when

an individual who has professed to be a Christian goes to pieces morally, or when a whole society, like that of 18th-century France, is rotten with corruption. It has been asked more frequently and more emphatically when such an obviously unchristian institution as chattel slavery has been allowed to flourish under the shadow and even with the blessing of the church. It has been asked with peculiar insistence in our own day, when poverty, disease, labor oppressions, prison abominations, city miseries of various kinds, are seen to flourish in open and flagrant violation of the basic principles which are supposed to be characteristic of the religion of the Nazarene. But never before has this question been driven in upon our minds and hearts with such irresistible power as it is to-day by the indescribable and inexcusable outrages of this universal war. Does not the mere fact of such a recrudescence of barbarism as this prove, beyond any question, that Christianity is at the worst a positive evil and at the best a mere futility? Does not the inability of the church to stay this conflict in the beginning, and now to bring it to a speedy end or at least to mitigate in some measure its accompanying horrors, demonstrate with precision the permanent failure of the church as an organisation for human betterment? Why use this tool, or wield this weapon, or travel this road, any longer? Why not frankly admit, in the face of such a disaster as this, that Christianity has done nothing to destroy prejudice, soften enmity, banish lust and hatred from the human heart, and turn to other and more promising means for establishing jus-

tice, brotherhood, and peace among the nations of the earth? The rains have descended, the floods have come, the winds have blown, and behold this house tumbles straightway into hopeless ruin! Which proves, does it not, that it was founded upon nothing better than the sands of ignorance and superstition?

It is this question of the failure of Christianity, so forced upon our attention by the fearful events of this unhappy day, that I propose to consider in this address. And in order that we may not go sadly astray in our consideration of the problem involved, I want to make perfectly clear at this point what is implied, scientifically and philosophically, by this phenomenon which on the one side appears to us as failure and on the other side as success. What do we mean by success, and what do we mean by failure?

In my endeavour to answer this question, let me take my starting point from a statement of Mr. Herbert Spencer in his *Principles of Ethics*. In one of the opening chapters of this great work, in discussing the distinction between a thing which is good and a thing which is bad, he states that a material object is good if it fulfils the purpose for which it was intended, and that it is bad if it fails to fulfil this purpose. Thus he says, to quote his own words, "A good knife is one that will cut; a good gun is one that will carry far and true; a good house is one that yields the shelter, comfort, and accommodation sought for"; and a knife or a gun or a house is called bad, if it fails to fulfil these specific purposes. In the same way, continues

Mr. Spencer, if "from lifeless things we pass to living ones, we similarly find that these words in their current applications refer to efficient purpose. The goodness or badness of a pointer or a horse, of a sheep or an ox, ignoring all other attributes of these creatures, refers to the fitness of their actions for effecting the purposes men use them for."

Exactly this same distinction can be made in regard to the problem of success and failure. Indeed, Mr. Spencer intimates as much when he says later on, in this same chapter which I am quoting, "that we call things good or bad according to their success or failure." From this point of view, if we want to know whether a certain thing is a success or a failure, we must first find out the inherent purpose of the particular object which is under investigation, and then, in the second place, put the object to the practical test, to see if this inherent purpose is fulfilled. Thus, to use some of the examples suggested by Spencer, I hold in my hand here a knife and I want to know if that knife is a success. In determining this question, I first ask myself what a knife is for; and then concluding that its purpose is that of cutting wood and other material, I at once proceed to open a blade, and see by actual experiment what its qualities are in this direction. If it cuts quickly and smoothly, I call the knife a success; if not, I have no hesitation, whatever its merits in other directions, in calling it a failure. So with a gun, which I understand to be an instrument for discharging a bullet into a distant target. In determining the question of the

merit of my rifle as such an instrument, I instantly proceed to load and fire; and according or not as my ball goes far and true, I call the gun a success or a failure. And the same thing is true of a house or a building. In the city of Boston, for example, there is a famous Public Library. From the point of view merely of its beauty as a building, the structure ranks as one of the two or three supreme masterpieces of American architectural achievement. In studying it as a library, however, we remember that its one specific purpose as a building is not to be beautiful and impressive but to facilitate the storing and handling of large quantities of books. And when we discover the fact, long notorious in Boston, that it is difficult to store or handle books in this library with convenience or despatch, we at once declare, in spite of the dignity of its entrance portico, the wonder of its staircase, and the greatness of its mural paintings, that the building is a failure, after all. The whole phenomenon of success and failure, in other words, is wrapped up in the question of the practical working out of inherent purpose. The crucial test is the pragmatic test of workableness. Does an object like a knife, or an organism like a hunting dog, or a movement like democracy, actually fulfil the inherent purpose for which it is intended and to which it is dedicated? Does it work as it ought to work, do the things it ought to do, achieve the end it ought to achieve? If so, then it is a success! If not, then it is a failure!

Now the application of all this to the problem of the success or failure of Christianity is of course evident.

If I understand Christianity at all, it is the purpose of this religion to carry out the one great and sublime purpose supremely manifest in the word and work of Jesus, although not by any means limited to this one teacher — that of binding men together in permanent relations of peace and brotherhood through the operation of the spirit of love. Its object is not to build churches, or establish hierarchies, or write and defend creeds; not to put the name of Christ into any state or national constitution; not to force allegiance to Christ upon any willing or unwilling convert in India or Patagonia; not to lay down the acceptance of any interpretation of Christ's person as the condition of salvation in this or any other world. The purpose of Christianity is simply to increase the sum total of goodwill in the hearts of men, and thus the sum total of genuine happiness, security and peace in the world; to extirpate hate and foster love; to banish prejudice and suspicion, and establish sympathy and understanding; to allay violence and discord, and cherish gentleness, meekness, and sacrifice "for others' sakes"; to exalt the dignity of human nature, maintain the equality of men in the domain of the spirit, reveal that sense of brotherhood which will disarm injustice, overthrow oppression, and banish evil from the inhabited world; to bring in that Kingdom of God, that democracy of man — call it what you will — which means a social order determined and controlled not by fear, or greed, or pride, or "wickedness in high places," but by the simple and noble principles of the spirit which we have come, through long

tradition, to associate with the life and teachings of Jesus. If Christianity does these things, it is a success, no matter what it does or does not do in other ways. If Christianity does not do these things, then it is a failure, no matter how many or how glorious its churches, how numerous or how ardent its converts, how loud or how long its cries of adoration unto God. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."

Now when we come to the all-important question as to whether or not, in actual practice, Christianity has done these things, and can thus be judged to be a success or a failure from this one essential point of view, I find myself brought inevitably to two very definite conclusions.

In the first place, I find that, wherever Christianity has been given a fair and honest trial, it has proved to be a success in every sense of the word. To our question, Is Christianity a Failure? the answer has often been made, as we know, that one cannot say whether Christianity is a failure or not, as it has never been tried! This answer is witty just to the extent that it is untrue. Christianity *has* been tried — in most places and at most times feebly, timidly, half-heartedly, but even so, successfully; in some few places and on some few occasions, enthusiastically, courageously, devotedly, and always thus, triumphantly. Jesus tried Christianity, even if nobody else did, and with results so momentous that the date of his birth is regarded by more than half of hu-



manity as the turning-point in the history of the race. But Jesus, to his own glory be it said, was not the last nor yet the first to try this great method of human living. Moses tried it, when he led Israel out of the land of bondage and flesh-pots, and gave to his people those immortal laws which Jesus declared could all be summed up in the commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy mind and all thy heart and all thy soul and all thy strength; and thy neighbour as thyself." Isaiah tried it, when he bade his people not to trust in chariots because they are many and horsemen because they are strong, but to turn rather to the Holy One of Israel and trust in him alone. Socrates tried it, when he listened to the still small voice within his breast, and commended to his disciples his precepts of the virtuous life. Marcus Aurelius tried it, when he learned to possess his own soul amid the temptations of the Roman palace and the trials of the German bivouac, and to rule his people with equity and compassion. St. Ambrose tried it, when he refused to allow the great Emperor Theodosius to bring his gift to the altar until he had first reconciled himself to his brethren, the people, whom he had outraged with violence and oppression. St. Francis tried it, when he cast away the wealth and comfort into which he was born, and went out literally naked to live the life of poverty and obedience. William Penn tried it, when he came unarmed into the wilderness of Pennsylvania, and lived at peace with the Susquehanna Indians. David Livingstone tried it, when he lost himself in Africa, and bound to him with ties of



undying love the ruthless savages of the jungles. Leo Tolstoy tried it, when he put on his peasant shirt, took in hand his flail and spade, and by the sheer power of abnegation, non-resistance, and universal sympathy, so plead the cause of brotherhood that his became the mightiest voice of the nineteenth century. Jane Addams tried it, when she established Hull House and made friends with the friendless hordes of the Chicago slums. Thomas Mott Osborne tried it, when he immured himself within prison walls for a week, and found the pure gold hidden away in the hearts of the toughest convicts of Auburn. Thousands of men and women, in all ages and among all peoples, unknown and unremembered, have tried this Christianity, of which we speak so slightly. And always, without exception, these disciples have proved that Christianity does the very thing which it was intended to do, and therefore is a success!

Nor is it only in private life and by separate individuals that Christianity has been thus successfully applied. More widely than most of us have ever realised, Christianity has been tried in the vast areas of social life, and large domains thereof have been brought under the sway of Christ's law in their spirit and their fundamental structure. Turn, for example, to Prof. Rauschenbusch's book entitled, *The Christianising of the Social Order*, and read his impressive chapter on "the Christianised sections of our social order," wherein he enumerates one by one the various institutions of society which have to some degree been Christianised, and to just exactly this same degree have

demonstrated the success of Christianity as a working formula of life.

The first institution which he mentions, and by all odds the most typical, is that of the family. In its earliest stages the family was anything but a lovely or beneficent relationship. Having its origin in pride and brutish passion, held together by stern force and utter selfishness, it worked out inevitably in the end into the most dreadful forms of despotism and exploitation. The servants in the household were invariably slaves, whose comfort and even lives were at the free disposal of the master. Wives were seized as booty in war or purchased openly like cattle, and represented no higher end than the gratification of sex desire, the breeding of children, and a certain amount of unpaid labour-power. The children, especially the girls, were so much capital, to be utilised, as Rachel was utilised by Laban, for the profit of the father. Now and again these intolerable conditions were ameliorated by the development of real affection between husband and wife, parents and children, master and servants. But at bottom the family represented nothing but primitive force and brutality; and had any old patriarch, like Priam or Jacob, been told that the introduction of love and gentleness into the relationship, would not only ennoble the persons involved but actually strengthen the family as an institution, he would have laughed the ridiculous proposition to scorn.

And yet this is just exactly what has taken place. Slowly age by age, as Prof. Rauschenbusch points out,

the family has become Christianised — by which we mean that the simple principles of Christian living have been applied to the human relationships involved. “The despotism of the father, fortified by law, custom, and economic possession, has passed into approximate equality between husband and wife. The children have become the free companions of their parents, and selfish parental authority has come under the law of unselfish service. Economic exploitation by the head of the family has been superseded by economic co-operation and a satisfactory communism of the family equipment. Based on equal rights, bound together by love and respect for individuality, governed by the law of mutual helpfulness, the family to-day furnishes the natural habitation for a Christian life and fellowship.” In this field of social experience, in other words, Christianity has been tried with seriousness and sincerity. And lo! it has worked. It has elevated and not lowered the standards of life, it has purified and not corrupted the relations of men and women, it has ennobled and not degraded the personalities involved, above all it has fostered the general order and stability of the family as an institution, and added immeasurably to the sum total of peace, joy, and goodwill among men. Here in this most intimate and therefore most difficult form of social relationship, Christianity has been tried, and here it has been demonstrated, to the extent of its application at least, a triumphant success.

What is true here of the family is equally true, although to a lesser degree, with certain other great

institutions of our social life. In the field of organised religion itself, in the field of education and enlightenment, more narrowly in the field of politics, still more narrowly in the field of industry, the application of the Christian principles of life have been, or are being, tried. And in every case, without exception, the trial proves successful. It is true that nowhere is the application complete, and for this reason, and just to this extent, is the success of Christianity nowhere complete. The application, after all, even in such an institution as the family, is still only in process, owing to our half-hearted acceptance of the precepts of the Nazarene, and our almost hopeless timidity in putting these precepts into practice. But so far as the process has gone, it has been uniformly successful, and gives every warrant for the confident expectation that further and more extensive application would be immediately followed by further and more extensive success. Every honest trial of Christianity, either in private or social life, only adds to the impressiveness of the demonstration that Christianity works. Every rigorous attempt to live the law of love only proves the truth of Jesus's immortal prophecy that "he that heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rains descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock." Survey the whole area of our civilisation, study carefully the conditions which there prevail, and then ask if Prof. Rauschenbusch is not right when

he lays down the assertion that those domains of human life which have come to some extent under the sway of Christianity, interpreted in the larger spiritual sense of the law of love, "are by common consent the source of our happiness and the objects of our pride, while those portions of the social order which are still unchristianised are the source of our misery and the cause of our shame."

This observation brings us now directly to the second of my conclusions in regard to the problem of the application of Christianity as the test of its success. I have already endeavoured to demonstrate that, wherever Christianity as a law of life has been sincerely and courageously applied, it has worked. I would now add to this the second and complementary principle, that any other law of life, when sincerely and courageously applied, has not worked. Christianity in other words is not only a success, but it is the only thing in the whole history of humanity which is a success.

Take, for example, those very facts which are most commonly, and may I add, most strangely cited as evidences of the failure of Christianity!

Here is a man who, after long years of professed devotion to the church, goes morally to pieces! Here, we say, is evidence of the failure of Christianity! But if we come to examine the exact conditions of this offender's life, I wonder if we shall find so much evidence of the failure of Christianity, as evidence of the failure of something else. I usually find, when the life of such a man is investigated, that, whatever his theo-

logical professions or ecclesiastical associations, he has been practising not justice, mercy and good faith at all, but lust, greed and hate. He has been exploiting and not serving his fellow men, seeking the augmentation of his powers and possessions at the expense of the public welfare, violating every principle of fair-dealing, every precept of sympathy, every ideal of brotherhood, in his selfish pursuit of his own prosperity and happiness. And in the end, of course, his course has brought him nothing but tragic failure. But this failure is the failure not of Christianity, but of that neglect or even defiance of Christianity, which has been the consistent practice of this ruined life. This unhappy man built his house not upon the rock of love but upon the sands of hate, and it was inevitable, sooner or later, that it should fall.

Or take the great fact of poverty, which is being frequently cited in our own age and generation as a crowning illustration of the failure of Christianity. It is true that in a truly Christian world no such horror as the swarming multitudes of the poor could exist for a single instant. But how long since, let me ask, has the industrial or economic world, to which the phenomenon of poverty properly belongs, been entitled to be regarded as in any sense of the word Christian? As I look at the various spheres of life, where men have ordered relationships with one another, I find no sphere from which the precepts of Christianity have been, and in a large measure still are, more absolutely excluded than from what we know as the economic order. "In-

dustrial life has been for centuries the unregenerate section of our social life." It has been the exact antithesis, for example, of the Christianised institution of the family. In place here of co-operation we have had competition, in place of concord we have had struggle, in place of the Golden Rule we have had the rule of gold. Selfishness and not sacrifice has been the dominating motive of existence, profit and not service the one great aim of endeavour, money and not men the basic standard of activity. Every relationship in the economic order has been characterised in the past by the absence and not the presence of Christian standards and ideals. In his relations with his competitors or associates the business man has obeyed the law not of love but of tooth and nail, which finds expression in the unchristian maxim "every man for himself, and the devil take the hindmost." In his relations with his employés, he has obeyed the law not of brotherhood but of exploitation, which works out into the hideous economic doctrine that labour is a commodity, to be purchased, like other commodities, in the cheapest market. And in his relations with the consumer, he has obeyed the law not of service but of profit, which is formulated in the repulsive phrase, *caveat emptor*, "let the buyer beware" ! The whole atmosphere and substance, all the law and all the life, of the world of industry is summed up in the cynical observation so universally familiar, "Business is business" — by which it is meant that business, whatever else it may be, is certainly not charity, or love, or

fellowship, or brotherhood, or any other sentimental nonsense commonly associated with the Christian religion.

Now here do we have one clearly defined sphere of life wherein men have attempted to get along without any regard for the spiritual laws laid down by Jesus. And the result of it all is seen in the moral degradation of the few at the top and the material and moral degradation of the many at the bottom. Poverty with all its attendant agonies — tenements, slums, child labour, industrial accidents, defenseless old age, unemployment, tuberculosis, prostitution, death — this is the perfect demonstration of the failure not of our Christian civilisation, but of that great section of our civilisation which is triumphantly unchristian. Its sufferings and miseries, corruptions and contagions, are the fruit of our neglect and defiance in the economic realm of Christianity. It is the curse of God upon the brow of Cain. And it is the glory of our time, let it be said in all justice, that the world is awakening to this fact and demanding that poverty shall go. Let it be noted, also, as signifying the true relation between Christianity and poverty, that the world is seeking its deliverance from this horror not by abandoning Christianity as a failure but by clinging to it as a success wherever tried, and extending it to this as it has already been extended to other fields. Nothing is more remarkable to-day than the sincere endeavour of our more enlightened business men to put into practical operation in their factories, their offices, and their railroads, the



basic precepts of the religion of Jesus, unless it be the success, in the terms of prosperity, happiness, and general goodwill, which this endeavour is achieving. For the first time in the history of the world we are beginning to-day to see the end of poverty — and this because we are for the first time beginning to see the identity of Christianity and sound economics.

Exactly the same line of argument must be laid down in regard to this fearful war which is at this hour ravaging the world. How is it possible for any sane man to see in this awful carnival of blood and iron an evidence of the failure of Christianity? I see in this stupendous tragedy the failure of battleships and standing armies to safeguard international peace; I see the failure of militarism to train great peoples in the virtues of gentleness and honour; I see the failure of secret diplomacy to guide the nations in the paths of amity and co-operation; I see the failure of political autocracies to maintain the true welfare of the people whom they claim to rule by divine right; I see the failure of commercial interests to bind the nations together by the bonds of profit and exchange; I see the failure of a social order to prosper on the basis of greed, hatred, and oppression; I see the failure of the idea that force can rule the world and so ruling bring happiness and health to men. All these failures I see. But nowhere do I see a failure of Christianity! For when and where has Christianity had any part in the governance of peoples? When have kings or emperors ruled in the spirit of the carpenter of Nazareth? When

have statesmen lifted their gaze from sordid pictures of material aggrandisement to loftier visions of a universal humanity? For forty years — ever since the close of the Franco-Prussian War — the nations of Europe have been rearing the edifice of social order not on the rock of brotherhood and love, but upon the sands of force, conspiracy, and pride. In the closing days of July, 1914, the rains of hatred descended, the floods of greed came, the winds of fear blew, and together they beat upon that lofty structure. And it fell! And in all the blood and tears, agony and shame of this black hour of human history, we see how great is the fall thereof. "War," said William Ellery Channing, "will never yield but to the principles of universal justice and love, and these have no sure root but in the religion of Jesus Christ."

O my friends, there is no failure in Christianity! If the test of success be the power to fulfil inherent purpose, Christianity is the one stupendous success of all the ages. If there is any failure here at all, it is the failure of men and women as individuals, and of the church as an organisation, to take Christianity seriously, to preach it courageously, and to practise it uncompromisingly. You and I as Christians fail often enough, because of our little faith. The church, as the organised body of Christians, fails often enough, because of its ignorant or corrupted confidence in the things of this world. The whole history of Christianity, from one point of view, is the story of the failure of the church to hear the sayings of the Master and

then to do them. Nor is this failure all a matter of the past. Woful was the failure of the church to speak and act, when the war-lords of Europe lifted their swords and sounded the call to arms! Woful is its failure to-day in blessing the banners of the combatants and praying God for victory upon this army or upon that! But the failure of the feeble individual or the misguided church has as little to do with the perfect truth of Christianity, as the dirty windows of my room have to do with the dazzling radiance of the sunlight which struggles through its unwashed panes. Many hopes and many dreams have been shattered in the last few weeks. The wreck and ruin of this stupendous conflict is not merely that of cities, fields, and ships, but that also of systems of thought, principles of action, visions of the mind and faiths of the heart. But despite the sneers and scoffings of the hour, Christianity is not to be numbered among the losses of mankind. (More truly than ever do we see and can we know to-day that love is the greatest thing in the world, that the law of Christ is the law of life, that the truth divinely taught and divinely lived by the Prince of Peace

"is still the light  
Which guides the nations groping on their way."

This is my answer to our question, Is Christianity a Failure? Wherever in private or social life it has been tried, we find peace and joy and love supreme. Wherever in private or social life it has been neglected

or defied, we find discord, misery, and hate. In the face of such results, shall we be persuaded to abandon Christianity or shall we be persuaded to cling to it, speak for it, work for it, more devotedly than ever before, in the confident assurance that it and it alone is the hope of the darkened world? This is no time for faltering or dismay. It is true that hatred and lust are ravaging the earth, that the brute passions of the jungle are loosed to do their worst, that savagery is for the moment triumphant. But in all this we see the failure not of Christianity but of barbarism, not of Christ but of Caesar, not of the law of love but of the policy of blood and iron. A social order which knows not Christ has finally and forever crashed to ruin, and in the agony of its downfall is the challenge to those who believe in him to bring in his Kingdom upon the earth.

The message of the hour, therefore, is clear, the path of duty plain. Through the cruel days and bitter nights of the awful years that are now impending, while men die in blood upon the field of battle and women die in tears within the stricken home, while little children whimper in fear and cry to ears that cannot hear and seek with faltering feet for paths now strangely lost, while fields are blasted like a desert, inhabited places laid waste, and the very heavens blotted out in smoke and leaping flame, while

“Our world has passed away  
In wantonness o’er thrown,

There is nothing left to-day  
But steel and fire and stone,"

let us here in the safe refuge of this favoured land, do that which it is alone left us to do — bear witness, through the spoken word, the toiling hand, the loving heart, to our abiding trust in the law of love as the rock upon which to rear the new society that must some day rise out of the ashes of the old. The time will be long, the work hard, the agonies immeasurable. But on some glad day "the tumult and the shouting" will die, "the captains and the kings depart." And then, if we have been faithful to the heavenly vision, we shall make the stricken world to see that, amid all its blood and tears and wreckage,

"Still stands thine ancient sacrifice,  
A humble and a contrite heart."

Do you remember the parable, told long years ago by the assassinated Jaures, of the enchanted forest which "in a single day burst forth into magnificent flowering" under the gracious influence of the April sunshine? Full many a time, in the harsh tempests of winter, this sunshine must have seemed to be a failure. But at last, in God's good time, it proved itself to be the source of life, and behold! all the forest became beautiful with "joy and peace." Jaures called this sunshine the Ideal of Justice; I call it Christianity, or the law of love. But call it one thing or another, like him we hail, in trust and hope, amid the darkness of this night

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of raging storm, "the sunbeam" that shall some day  
charm the forest of human misery into the blossoming  
paradise of brotherhood and peace!

**THE END**







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